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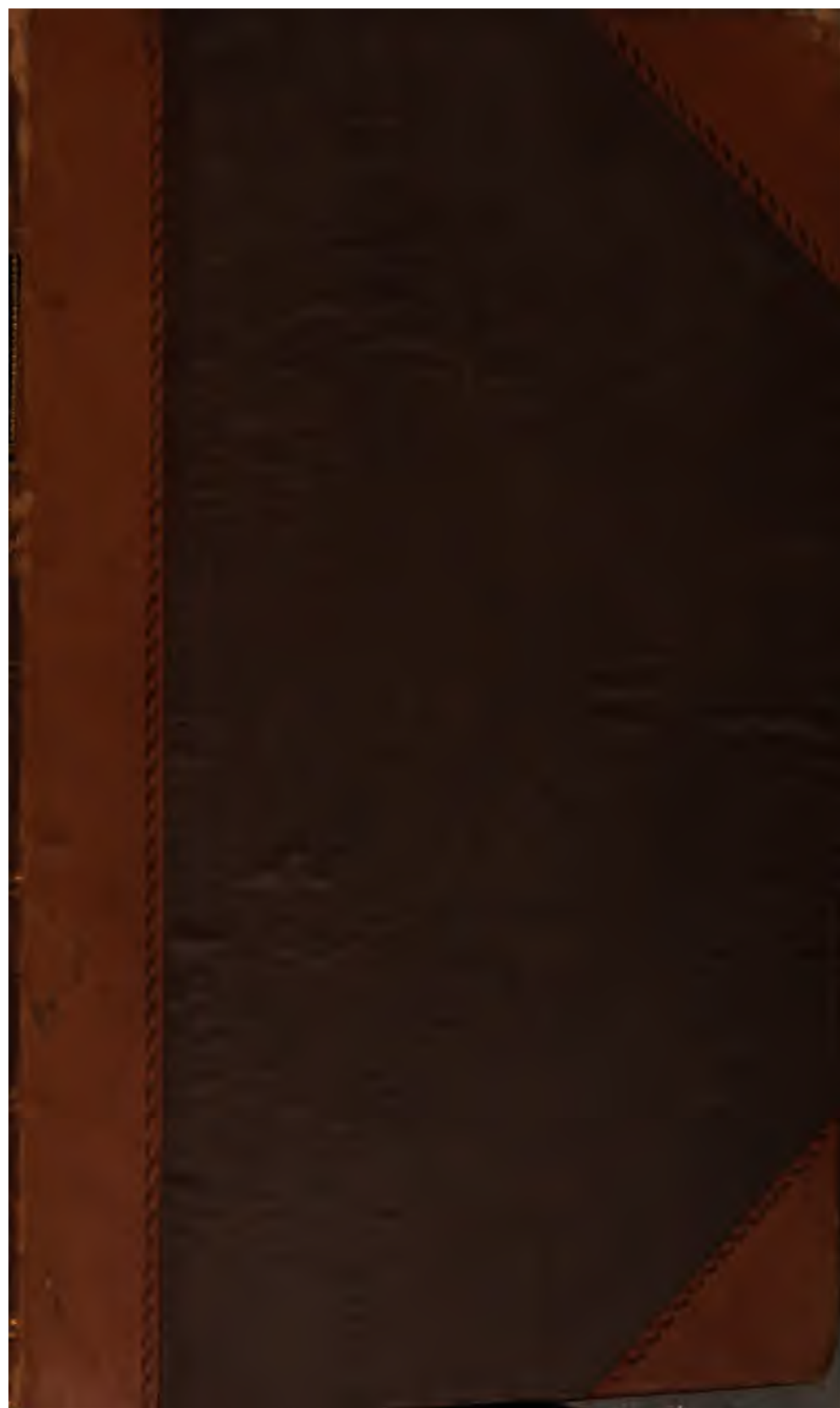
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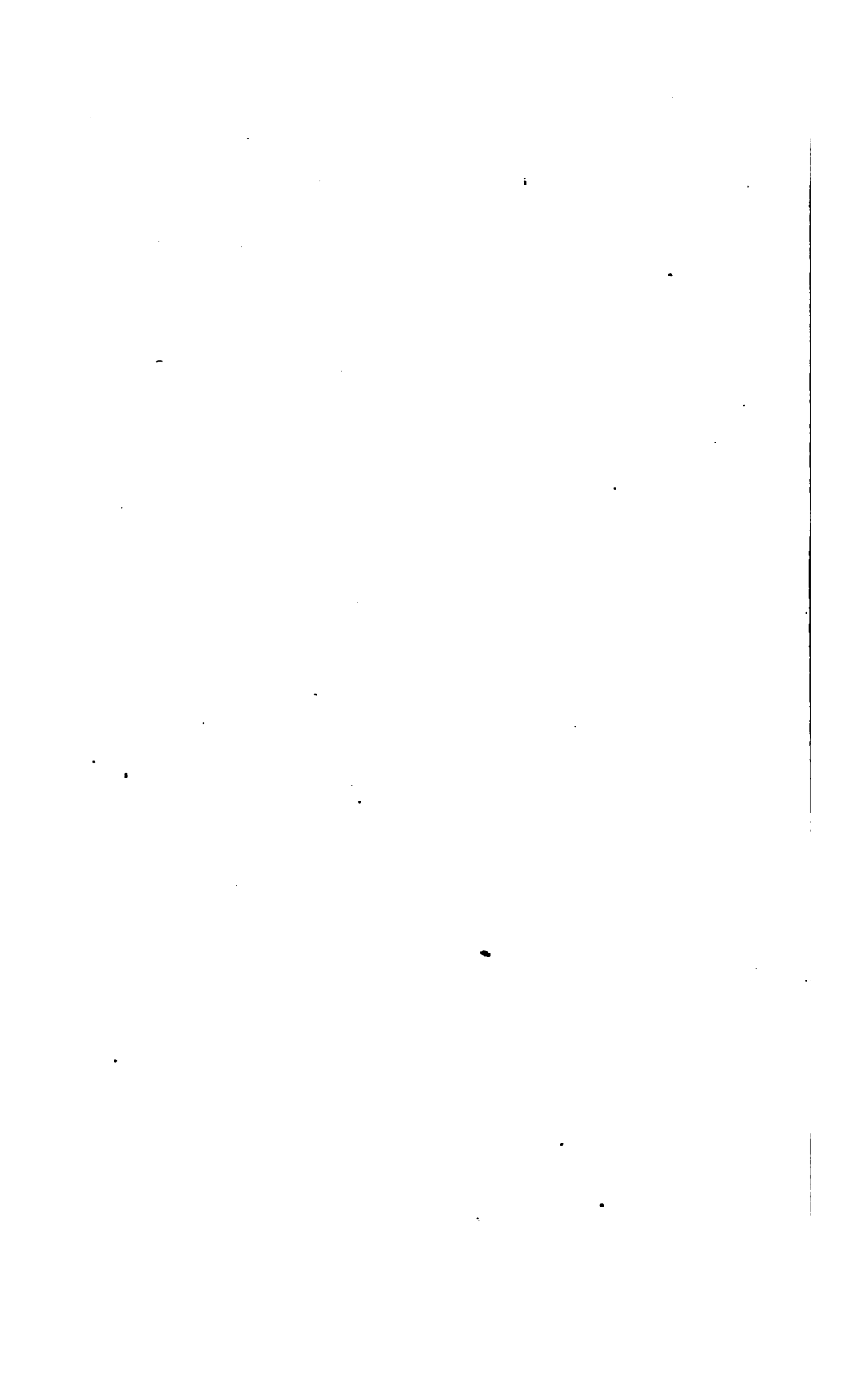
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L E T T E R S
ON
RECENT TRANSACTIONS
IN
I N D I A.



“Let us do what we please to put India from our thoughts,
we can do nothing to separate it from our public interest, and
our national reputation.”—BURKE.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

MR. BURKE, in his celebrated speech upon Mr. Hastings' India Bill, observes, " Mr. Hastings, in a letter to the Court of Directors, mentions the sums the Company never would have acquired, had the rigid ideas of public faith entertained by his colleagues regulated his conduct."

Had the rigid ideas of public faith, to which Mr. Hastings alludes, regulated the conduct of the Board of Control in our Afghanistan policy, what sum would not the Company have saved !

With the view to aid in correcting the erroneous impression which the speech of the late President of the Board of Control made in his place in the House of Commons, as published by Messrs. Ridgway & Co., the following Letters, written and partially circulated in 1838, 1839, 1840, and March 1841, are now laid before the public.

P R E F A C E.

IN submitting the following Letters to the public on the affairs of our Eastern Dominions, over which destinies the British Nation presides, I am fully aware that I expose myself to the imputation of being sumptuous for expressing opinions at variance with those entertained by the Local and Home Authorities. In adverting to our late proceedings in Afghanistan, I am uninfluenced by any motive, but the desire to see the Empire that has risen into being under the guidance of the Nation, rendered secure and flourishing by the wisdom of its councils.

The subjects to which I desire to call the attention of the public are:—The policy observed towards the Court of Ava;—the advantage that might have been expected to spring from an alliance with Dost Mahomed, in preference to Shah Shoojah-ool-Moolk;—the expediency of assuming, in our relations with the states comprised within certain boundaries, a paramount and controlling authority, and the character of the connexion we should maintain with our Asiatic possessions.

These are grave topics, demanding the most dispassionate deliberation; as the consequences of our measures must be considered to involve the stability of the British Monarchy. And they have been touched

upon, under a deep conviction that they demand stronger deliberative powers, more competent knowledge, and more extensive and varied talents than I can bring to the examination of the interests they embrace.

Events are in progress, that it is essential the Nation should examine, freed from the bias of party feeling, as the interests of England and its Indian Empire are so intermingled, that one cannot be affected without the exciting cause exercising an influence over the other.

The affairs of Central Asia have now assumed an aspect that demands the serious contemplation of Great Britain. Russia has announced to the world her determination to occupy Khiva, till such time as the objects which have induced the measure have been realized. What these objects really are, it is not very difficult to fathom ; although her designs are said to be the redemption of her subjects from slavery, and security for the future against the lawless aggressions of her Toorkooman neighbours. There can be little doubt but that the position we have taken up in Afghanistan has led her to determine upon the occupation of Khiva, and that she will continue to retain her position there, so long as we occupy Cabool. That we shall ever evacuate Afghanistan, and leave the Shah to his own resources, is not reconcileable with the policy upon which we have avowedly acted ; and that Russia will retire from Khiva without exacting a similar sacrifice upon our part, is by no means credible. We have each taken up our out-posts ; and the first hostile shot in Europe must infallibly lead to collision in Asia. It is incumbent, therefore, upon those in

whose hands the affairs of our Indian Empire are vested to take a deliberate view of our present situation, the events that must follow the first outbreak in Europe and of the means we possess for repelling an attack on Afghanistan, and preserving our established predominance eastward of the Indus. We see that Russia has the control of the Euxine and the Caspian, and that she may, with little difficulty, secure the free passage of the Aral. The Oxus, at the cost of little labour may be made available in event of any forward movement hereafter. The undivided resources of Persia are also at her command. There does not exist any insurmountable obstacle to be overcome between her advanced force and the sources whence its supplies are drawn. The distance from Khiva to Herat, and the difficulties of the way, are less than from Cabool to that city. And if the Oxus be made available for the transport of stores, such impediment as do exist will be greatly lessened. Our situation at Cabool is very different. The Sikhs possessing all the country from the Sutledge to the Sooleman mountains, materially interfere with our supplies; and the slightest reverse in Afghanistan, (should hostilities take place with Russia,) would most probably induce the Government of Lahore to seek a connection with our enemies. The consequences of such a course are not to be lost sight of. Our future well-being would seem to depend upon the sagacity with which arrangements are made for securing a free passage, at all times, through the Punjab.

The Sikh government is at present distracted by contending parties; and we are bound, as we value the security of our dominion, to avail ourselves of every

opening to acquire, not only a dominant influence in her councils, but the acquisition of territory to the eastward of the Indus.

If a passage for the convoys, which are occasionally sent into Afghanistan, is obtained with difficulty,—which, although scarcely credible, is actually the case,—what are we to expect in event of any reverse hereafter? If the removal of an agent from the Court of Lahore,* is the price now exacted, for compliance with a requisition for a passage through the Seikhs' states, what demand may not be made when we are considered to be in a situation incapable of compelling acquiescence? We pay one lakh of rupees annually to the robber chiefs of the Khyber pass, for unmolested egress and ingress, notwithstanding which, the greatest difficulties and danger are encountered in the passage. If such be the case, while the triumph of our arms is yet glowing in the minds of our Allies, what are we to look for if, in the course of future events, we should suffer any reverse? These are things requiring immediate consideration. It is unwise to leave such important contingencies to be dealt with as they may occur, when our armies are actually engaged at a distance from our frontiers. Confidence in our resources may be natural and admissible; but a neglect of obviously prudent arrangements, calculated to facilitate an onward movement when it may become necessary, is, to say the least of it, an act bordering upon neglect of a paramount duty. It is wise to avoid a catastrophe. When the storm rages, invocation may be vain!

* It is currently believed, that the removal of Liet.-Col. Wade from Lahore, was required by the Lahore authorities previously to granting a passage for a convoy in February or March, 1840.

LETTERS,

§c. §c.

LETTER I.

July 10, 1838.

THE period has arrived when the Governor-General of our Eastern Dominion would appear to be left with but few alternatives in providing for the safety of our empire. It would seem that the progressive consequences of each succeeding war have brought us into contact with those parts of the circle, which it has been the undeviating desire of the Legislature to avoid,—a contact which has been looked upon by our best Indian Statesmen and Politicians as the occasion upon which we should be necessitated to select between the assumption of a paramount controlling Sovereignty, or act in concert with confederated States for the preservation of the country from the ambitious designs of Russia.

If it be allowed that we have arrived at this juncture, it behoves us to take a mature, deliberate, and extensive view of the consequences to which these courses will severally lead. Having done so, we may then calculate with precision the wisdom of adopting the one, and rejecting the other.

In examining the first alternative,—the assumption of a paramount controlling Sovereignty,—we should turn our eyes to the line of policy that Russia has been steadily pursuing through the successive reigns of the last five Sovereigns who have presided over the destinies of that extraordinary nation. And in doing so, we shall find that they have act-

upon a definite and consistent principle of aggrandizement, and that it has been actively and deliberately followed up by each Sovereign as he ascended the throne. The effects of this system are palpable in the gradual accession of territory which Russia has acquired in Asia; each war and each measure extending the limits of her dominion, till it has reached an extent and acquired a stability, that we ought not to behold without entertaining serious and wholesome doubts of the safety of our Indian possessions, if she is permitted to proceed, unmolested, in the prosecution and consummation of those plans which must, at no distant day, place her in possession of the undisputed Sovereignty of Asia. She has succeeded in shutting us out of the Euxine Sea, by the closing of the Dardanelles, and her territory nearly embraces the Caspian. She has taken possession of all the country between these two Seas, from the Don, southward to Tiflis. The Persian Empire is at her disposal, and its Sovereign, under her dictation, is at the head of an army aided by the council of Russian Officers, before Herat, a strong city, on the high road to India. We further perceive the Chief of the Afghan Sirdars disposed to seek her aid and protection in support of his designs against the power of Runjeet Singh, and we also find the whole of our Northern and Eastern Frontier, from Cashmere to Rangoon, not only ready, but eager to coalesce with any power for the expulsion of their hated enemies.

Having duly considered the foregoing actual condition of things, we may proceed to the consideration of the second part of our question,—the propriety of remaining within the present limits of our rule, and adopting measures with the powers that be, for the preservation of our dominion. And here, upon the threshold of the matter under consideration, it is obvious, that a confederation with our independent and our subsidiary Allies, calculated to organize an effective combined resistance in the hour of danger, is a delusion, that nothing short of besotted ignorance of the character and history of our rule, or extreme infatuation, could seriously contemplate. Can it be supposed, that any confederation within the compass of our power to organize, would be binding under the

magical effects of a call upon the Kings and Chiefs to the eastward of the Indus, to rouse themselves, and throw off the shackles by which they have long been galled, and achieve, in concert with the united powers of Russia, Persia, and Afghanistan, an independence for which they have long secretly pined? No, not for a moment. The talismanic thrill of such an invitation would act with the force and rapidity of a galvanic shock, to the most remote corners of our possessions. Not only every State, but every petty Zemindar throughout India, would yield a ready and hearty acquiescence to a call, a compliance with which, they might look upon as likely to restore them to that position in society from which they were expelled by our conquest, and which they can have no hopes of regaining so long as our power endures. Of this we have abundant historical evidence from the year 1790, up to this hour, in the increasing intrigues and combinations among the Native Princes and Chiefs to crush our power. Do we not remember the endeavours of Hyder Aly and his son, which were happily counteracted by the wisdom and firmness of the nobleman (the Marquis Cornwallis) then at the head of the Indian Government? Have we forgotten the danger which threatened our existence by the organization of a large force under French Officers by the Nizam, which was disbanded by the prompt foresight and energy which marked the commencement of Lord Wellesley's career in 1797, and served as a harbinger to those after-deeds which have engraved his name in bright and indelible characters in the annals of British India? If these instances, and the intrigues of the late Sooltan of Mysore, are insufficient to prevent our entertaining the fallacious expectation, of the sincere and hearty co-operation of the Native States, in the hour of necessity, let us turn to the subsequent history of our proceedings for further evidence. In the pages that record the occurrences of those times, we find all that can be required to bring the deep conviction of the impolicy of depending upon the fidelity of our Allies and subjects (whose interests are antipodes to ours) in the hour of danger, home to our minds. There, too, we shall find recorded the war waged in 1804 and 1805, by the confederated Maharatta

States against our power, from which the transcendent talents of the Marquis of Wellesley, aided by his illustrious brother, and the justly celebrated Lord Lake, under Divine Providence, alone preserved our Empire. Proceeding further in history, we come to the Nepaulese War in 1814, which was intimately connected with the second Maharatta War which followed it in 1817, both originating in the desire of expelling us from India. And here our power was again upheld by that enlightened and comprehensive policy, (directed by that able statesman and soldier, the Marquis of Hastings,) which can alone uphold our dominion in India, placed as it is, at the distance of half the globe from the resources of the mother-country. Still further on we come to the first Burmese War, in 1824, which was confidently looked to by every Native power in India as the sure means of our annihilation.

If all this will not suffice to satisfy the scepticism of the self-confident, have we not further corroboration in the negotiations now carrying on between the Courts of Ava and Katmandoo, and the recently detected desire of the latter, evinced by the embassy it has dispatched to Cabool? When the demonstration of such interminable opposition to our power, and hatred to our rule, is substantiated by a concatenation of hostilities, who can for a moment doubt the policy, that the preservation of our Empire would seem to dictate?

To establish and maintain the former, we must be prepared to adopt measures that at first sight may appear wild and pregnant with danger; but the more closely they are examined, the more evident will appear the wisdom of adopting them.

England must insist upon the free passage of the Dardanelles, and the uncontrolled navigation of the Euxine; any opposition to this, should be considered as a declaration of war. Acting upon which it would be our policy to reorganize and guarantee the independence of Poland; to stimulate and aid the Porte in the recovery of her provinces in Asia Minor and Armenia; and whilst this was going on in Europe, we should in this country, restore the old King of Ava, confine him to the eastward of the Irra-

waddie, parcel out the intermediate country between our present frontier and that river into petty subsidiary States and have a military road from Munnypore to that river, and impose a subsidiary force on Nepaul and Bootan.

To the west and northwest, the Indus, from its source to the Sea, must be our boundary. The Afghan kingdom must be regenerated, and an intimate connection established between us. This course would be the work of time, but no delay in commencing the European part of it should take place. If we permit the second move of the Russian game to take place; if we allow a Russian-Persian army to invade Candahar; if we allow, by our supineness, a confederacy to be organized between Nicholas, Mahumud Shah and Dos Mahumud, our folly may be disastrous.

Should the magnitude of the Empire thus faintly shadowed out, and the difficulties and dangers of acquiring it scare us from the attempt, we must in that case look at the second proposition proposed in the commencement of these remarks, and in so doing, I think it will appear manifest that we shall never be able to maintain our present situation—we must proceed onwards, or we must retrograde till our kingdom resolves itself into our commencement—a factory—and that we should not be long allowed to retain.

Russia, unchecked, will proceed, and her approach will advance those she compels to precede her. These events will be the signal for the Nepaulese and Burmese to unite in an occurrence, which would excite into fearful action the abundant heterogeneous elements that exist within the boundaries of our rule. Considering, therefore, this vast and vital question throughout the extended line of its bearings, upon the broad basis of its own merits, our safety would appear to depend upon our adoption of the first proposition. Wisdom, moderation and firmness would be necessary to bring the plan into such a steady course of action that every single act of our Government in the intermediate time, between the commencement and the completion of our arrangements, shall tend to the perfection of the grand design.

To enable the Indian Government to act upon uniform

and consistent principles, instead of the vacillating policy of every successive President of the Board of Control, who may or may not have studied the history and nature of our Indian Empire, it is essential that the ulterior intentions of the Crown, with regard to its possessions in this country, be definitely fixed and distinctly pointed out to the Indian Board and the Court of Directors. The organization of neither of these bodies being such as to fit them independently of each other, or collectively, independent of the Ministers of the Crown, to decide upon such measures and direct their execution, as may be necessary to secure and perpetuate our Asiatic sway; a conquest that, for the most part, has been achieved by the genius of Clive, Hastings and Wellesley, acting under the influence of uncontrollable circumstances, and in opposition to the repeated injunctions of the Court of Directors. The object of the Crown can only be the security of possessions, inextricably connected with the well-being of the British Empire, and every measure of the home and local authorities must keep that object incessantly in view. With it, the happiness of our subjects is inseparably interwoven. Having laid the foregoing down as a fixed principle to regulate all our proceedings, we should, regardless of sect or country, so remodel all our institutions, as to admit our subjects to a free and full participation of the honours and emoluments of the State, making education, acquirements and moral character the only ground of preferring one candidate to another. If this policy be adopted, India will necessarily cease to be considered and treated as a conquered State. All our institutions will undergo a gradual but complete change. The care of Government will no longer be bestowed upon the remittance of a large annual tribute to Europe. It will, on the contrary, occupy itself upon matters connected with the improvement of this country, the development and cherishing of its resources, and everything tending to perfect its police, fiscal and judicial establishments, so as to render the inhabitants secure, tranquil and happy. Education, colonization and moral improvement will rapidly follow such a change in the nature of our rule. With the Sea, the Indus, the Ganges, the Brahmaputra and the Irrawaddie for our boundaries; and all

within cemented into one mass, by the indissoluble tie of identity of interests, common safety, mutual dependence, and a reciprocity of feeling, we might, with prudence in our intercourse with the nations with whom we should be brought into contact, set the intrigues of Russia at defiance.

The benefit that would fall to the share of England by such an alteration in our policy, would prove incalculable. The demand for her produce would be inexhaustible. The increase to her maritime establishment would be immense, and the field thus opened for the employment of her capital and youth, would prove commensurate to the demands.

LETTER II.

3rd Oct. 1838.

THE only legitimate object of interference with the powers to the westward of the Indus would seem to be the prosperity and security of the British power in India. Any other plea must appear in the eyes of the world a compromise of our dignity, or a cloak to conceal acts of aggression and aggrandizement, unwarranted alike by good faith, by our constant professions, and by those interests which we are bound by every principle of justice, honour, and the common rights of mankind to abstain from violating. Upon this principle, let us examine how far the measures, now in operation, and the statement put forth by Government are exposed to censure, or accord with our duty and our interest.

To come to an accurate decision on the line of policy that Government has adopted towards the present rulers in Afghanistan, it is necessary to be informed of the nature of any Treaty that may subsist between the East India Company and Runjeet Singh, as its provisions must naturally have exercised some influence over the mind of the Right Honourable the Governor General, in the selection of the course upon which we have now entered.

Conceding, as we readily do, that the Treaty entered into by Lord William Bentinck in 1832, contains provisions calculated to hamper and perplex the Government in determining the party with which the interests of the State ought to be identified, what avails the admission, and in what manner can it affect the matter under investigation? The admission and its consequences illustrate nothing beyond the fact of Lord William's Treaty being a most impolitic measure, which will be fully developed in the course of the present inquiry.

The security, stability, and prosperity of the British pos-

sessions in Asia, is the sole object that ought to have been allowed any weight as to the expediency of entering into any contract with Runjeet Singh, and every thing tending in the remotest manner to interfere with the working out of this great object, should have been considered, and avoided as detrimental to the interests over which the Government has been called upon to exercise a watchful, prudent, and uncompromising superintendence.

From the experience of past events, from the knowledge which we possessed of the conduct of Russia, and the purpose which directed it, it has long been manifest to the world, that she has eagerly, sedulously, and intermittingly endeavoured to acquire a controlling influence in the affairs of Asia, seeing that it would secure the means of advancing her commercial interest, and enable her more effectually to oppose Great Britain in one of her most vulnerable points, upon any occasion which might bring them into collision. To defeat this object, and avert the consequences of Russian intrigues in Asia, was the legitimate, and ought to have been the unvarying principle of all our political measures. To see how far, and in what way we have swerved from this obvious course, it will be necessary to take a view of the condition of Afghanistan, antecedent to the present moment; its relations with the ruler of the Punjab, and the means possessed by that power to interfere effectually with such arrangements as we might have considered it advisable to have entered into with its several rulers.

Looking back thirty years into the history of that country, we find it divided into parties contending for the interest of the descendants of Ahmed Shah, and for those of the family of the celebrated Minister, Futteh Khan, who was barbarously murdered by the sons of a weak master, of whose government he had been the whole support; and that Herat alone, out of the extensive possessions of the Dooranee Conqueror, remains in the possession of his descendants. In the progress of events, Shah Shoojah proving himself weak and unworthy, was deposed, and his brother, the imbecile and dissolute Mahmood, was raised to be the pageant of nominal power in his stead; the substance, being retained by his able Vizier

Futteh Khan, which caused a combination in Court, headed by Prince Kamran, who was jealous of the power enjoyed by the Minister over his father. In the mean time, Cashmere was subdued by the prompt and vigorous proceedings of the Vizier, who, by a bribe of nine lakhs of rupees, secured the concurrence and aid of the crafty ruler of the Punjab in the furtherance of his views. But a connection founded upon wrong, and cemented by corruption, for the purpose of rapine, was not destined to endure. The payment of the bribe being evaded, the Seikhs disgusted, retired from Cashmere, and their Chief, availing himself of the disloyalty of the officer in command of Attock, obtained that fortress for one lakh of rupees, upon which, Futteh Khan immediately returned to wreak his vengeance on his insidious Ally, and after a sharp attack by the van of his army under his brother Dost Mahumud, who was successful in his onset, most unaccountably, through the treacherous communications of pretending friends, each supposing that the other was defeated, lived to perceive that a glorious and signal victory was turned by a false report into a most disastrous failure. By this fatal mistake upon the plains of Chooch, the power of the Afghans ceased to the eastward of the Indus. Soon after which, Prince Kamran, having worked upon his weak parent, succeeded in his project and murdered Futteh Khan, the Warwick of Afghanistan, by whose sole ability and daring, Mahmood was raised to, and maintained upon the throne, from which he was virtually hurled upon the perpetration of the murder of the man to whom he was indebted for its occupation. Retiring before a small band of rebels, he took refuge in Herat, and sunk into a tributary to the Persian State. Upon which Shah Shoojah again erected the standard of sovereignty, but having neither energy, talent, nor character, his impotent attempt failed, and he became a pensioner of the British Government.

Eyoob being constitutionally of a more tame and yielding disposition, and less jealous of the kingly prerogative than his brother Shoojah, was selected as a fitter tool by the Barukzye clan, and on the condition of being satisfied with the empty title of Sovereign, and the farce of the coinage

being struck in his name, was elevated to a degraded throne, while the executive authority remained uncontested in the hands of his ministers. These proceedings led to a civil war that soon exhausted the power of the State, when the feeble and distracted condition of Afghanistan was taken advantage of by Runjeet Singh, who soon subdued every thing to the eastward of the Indus, and finally on the field of Ghazie, in 1823, discomfited the confederated Dooranee chiefs, which secured to him the sway over Peshawur.

Having given this condensed statement of Afghanistan from the year 1809, up to the present period, which has been taken from that intelligent traveller, Captain Burnes, I shall here give a short sketch of the state of the country, and the disposition of its rulers towards the British Government at the period of that officer's first visit to Candahar, and then notice what he remarks of Runjeet Singh, which I shall follow up by a condensed extract of the substance of the Manifesto recently published, and conclude this paper by a few succinct observations on the course we have adopted, its probable consequences, and a few remarks upon the advantage that must have accrued to the State from an alliance with the Ruler of Cabool.

Captain Burnes, in treating of the Commerce of Cabool in the second volume of his interesting and instructive work, regards the year 1816 as the epoch from which the Commercial interests of England superseded those of Russia in the capital of Afghanistan, which circumstance he attributes to the justice and equity of Dost Mahumud, whose vigilant administration has rendered the great road from Turkistan, passing through Cabool and Candahar, perfectly safe for the transportation of the lucrative commerce to which it gives egress. He describes Dost Mahumud as being much esteemed, owing to the mildness of his government and the security of property, and his justice as being a theme of praise by all. The peasant rejoices in the absence of tyranny and oppression, the citizen in the safety of his home, and the soldier in the regularity of his pay. His equity and moderation secure him many friends, and the warlike tribe of Junan-

there, which has so often turned the tide of conquest in the various struggles for dominion, are his avowed adherents.

The supremacy of the Barukzye family in Cabool, he states, as being agreeable to the people and favourable to the prosperity of the country. He describes it as being the largest of the Doorannee tribes, and consisting of 60,000 families, while the Sudozye, of which Shah Shoojah is a member, depends upon the support of other tribes. The head of the former, Hajee Jumal, is said to be the most influential of the Barukzye clan, and the principal means of the elevation of Ahmed Shah, whose descendants rewarded his services and devotion to the founder of their family by the murder of his son, Poybold Khan, and the atrocious assassination of his grandson, by Kamran of Herat. Hence, he observes, there can be no expectation that the tribe will ever consent to the restoration of Shah Shoojah, or any of his line, and the whole wealth of the country being in their hands, there is none other who can avail them. It is more difficult, he sagaciously observes, "to revive than to raise a dynasty; and in the common chain of events, if the country is to be ruled by another King, we must look for another family to establish its power in Cabool, and this in all probability will be the Barukzyes. The dynasty of the Sudozyes has passed away, unless it be upheld by foreign aid, and it would be impossible to reclaim the lost provinces of the Empire without a continuation of the same assistance. It is therefore evident that the restoration either of Shah Shoojah, or Kamran, is an event of the most improbable nature." Cabool, the same writer states, to consist of four Chiefships, Herat, Candahar, Cabool, and Peshawur; the former tributary to Persia, the latter to the Punjab. Dost Mahumud he describes as an enlightened individual and well disposed to the British Government, and he considers, that he will be able to secure a general supremacy over the kingdom on the death of Runjeet Singh. He finishes his remarks on this Chief by observing, "It would require no great expenditure to secure him; and be it remembered, he is in possession of the most important position of Asia as regards the security of British India." The Chiefs of Herat and Candahar hold the western portion of Afghan-

istan, the latter is unpopular, and at enmity with Kamran who is destitute of friends and considered an odious character by his countrymen. The population between Herat and Candahar are described by Conolly as anxious for the establishment of Kamran's sway over their country.

Of Runjeet Singh's government and its probable stability, Captain Burnes says; "It is too evident that those improvements have taken no root in the minds of the people, and that the tone of them has its termination, even in the precincts of the Court; nor is it less true, that the disposition of the master's mind to cherish these valuable institutions, declines with his advancing years, and that he bids fair to efface them with the transient glory of his reign. A well-stored treasury, with an army in arrears and clamouring for pay, increasing duties on the merchant and trader, exorbitant taxes on the husbandman, with embezzlement of the public revenues, and a general corruption in the higher officers of the state, are not symptoms favourable to the durability of a government. Yet the endurance of a people in an Asiatic kingdom depends more on the power of the prince, than the inclinations of the community, and while the ruler wastes not his treasures in reckless extravagance, and is possessed of a mind beyond his age, we may safely reckon on its stability during his natural life. It appears to me that Runjeet Singh in his career will have raised, formed, and destroyed a government." Captain Burnes continues to take a view of the aristocracy and the people. The former he characterises as presenting "a hollowness and decay, while the Khalsa Seikhs, amounting to about 500,000, are robust and brave." The bent of their disposition inclining them to the pursuits of war and agriculture.

Who can read this account of the present state of Afghanistan and the Punjab, (I speak of the time immediately preceding Captain Burnes' last visit in the latter end of 1836,) without feeling the thorough conviction, confiding in the correctness of the statements, that the Policy of our Indian government was to ally itself with the Chiefs of Afghanistan, without affording the ruler of the Seikh nation any just cause for taking umbrage at our proceedings.

Whoever has paid attention to the history of Russia in its proceedings with respect to the affairs of Asia, will not require to be informed, that she has been undeviatingly systematic in her exertions to acquire a predominant influence in the Councils of Constantinople and Tehran. That from the accession of Peter the Great up to this hour, the ascendancy in the affairs of Asia has been the principle upon which all her negotiations and wars with the Porte and Persia have been prosecuted and conducted. With these views laid down so clearly by the history of her proceedings, as not to admit of being misunderstood; with the effects of all the wars waged against Poland, Turkey, and Persia, it is difficult to imagine that we should have observed with apathy or indifference the steady approaches she has made to the confines of India, or that we should never have taken any serious steps to ward off so palpable a danger, until, by her councils, and dictation, and supported by her ambassador, an army of her passive tool and ally had actually besieged the principal strong-hold on the high road into the heart of Asia. So, however, it has most unaccountably been. In despite of all those who have written on the subject of Russian aggrandizement and invasion, and they have not been few, and in despite of the full and lucid account given by Captain Burnes, which has been thus imperfectly brought to the reader's notice, of the disposition of the natural allies of the British nation to bind up their interests with ours, it is most inconceivable that we should have been so backward in adopting measures to secure a permanent hold in the country in which the struggle for the Empire of India must take place, if it is ever attempted to be wrenched from our grasp. And now that we have been roused by the trumpets of our enemy sounding a charge within the limits of our frontiers, that we should have adopted the policy shadowed out in the following State-paper, is still more inconceivable.

On the 1st of October, 1838, the Government Gazette announced the Manifesto of the Right Honourable the Governor General of India, of which the substance is as follows:

To gain for the British Government in Central Asia the legitimate rights resulting from an interchange of benefits, a Treaty was made in 1832, with the Ameers of Sinde, and the Chiefs of Bhawulpore and the Punjab. In 1836 Captain Burnes was deputed to the Chief of Cabool to invite him to become a party to the arrangement. The Chief of Cabool is stated to have made an unprovoked attack on our ally Runjeet Singh, previous to Captain Burnes's reaching his destination, and the Governor General feared that Runjeet's promptly repelling the aggression would light the flames of war in the countries he desired should be the abode of peace and commercial enterprise. To avert the apprehended calamity, the Governor General offered his mediation to the Cabool Chief, if he would come into reasonable and just terms. In this state of the question, His Lordship heard of the intrigues of Persia in Afghanistan, the insults offered to the British Embassy, and the actual invasion of Herat by her armies. Dost Mahumud continued to maintain claims on Runjeet Singh that His Lordship from motives of justice and friendship could not countenance. The former averred his intention to call in the aid of Persia or any other power; he further evinced his designs of ambition and aggrandizement, and Captain Burnes left his Court. Dost Mahumud continued unyielding in his demands, and the Persian prosecuted his march on Herat, and contumaciously denied the right of the British Government to interfere. Our Minister in consequence left the Court, having declared all relations of amity to have ceased. In consequence of the foregoing, His Lordship turned his views on Shah Shoojah, whom he considered when in power as imbued with feelings of friendship for the British Government, which with the knowledge that he still had a strong party in the country, and the conviction that he would serve our purpose better than the Chiefs who maintained the justice of their demands on Runjeet Singh, and that the power of the nation consolidated under his authority would oppose a more secure barrier to foreign invasion than the divided and uncertain authority of several Chiefs, after mature deliberation satisfied His Lordship that our pressing necessities, combined with justice and policy.

warranted our allying ourselves with Shah Shoojah. Overtures were made to him, and arrangements entered into with Runjeet Singh, which terminated in a tripartite Treaty, making the friends and enemies of one, those of the other. In this Treaty, the integrity of Herat and its possession to its gallant defender are guaranteed. The Manifesto goes on to show that the protection of commerce, and the establishment of an impregnable barrier were provided for, and that measures were adopted to secure the reputation and interest of the English nation throughout Central Asia. It then states, that the Shah will enter his ancient realms, surrounded by his own troops, and supported against factious opposition by the British army, and expresses the confident hope, that he will be resealed upon his throne by his own subjects. His Lordship next gives expression to the assurance, that British influence will be sedulously exerted to reconcile differences, foster amity, and secure oblivion to the offences of all Chiefs who may make atonement by early submission, which will secure to them liberal and honourable treatment.

This document, we perceive, contains six principal objects, viz. :—

1st. To secure the fulfilment of a Treaty entered into in 1832 with the Ameer of Sind and the Chiefs of Bhawalpore and the Punjab.

2nd. To support Runjeet Singh against the ambitious designs of the impracticable Dost Mahumud.

3rd. To prevent the kindling of the flames of war where peace and commercial enterprise should prevail.

4th. To oppose the schemes of Persia, and preserve Herat.

5th. To render the English name respected through Asia.

6th. To erect an impregnable barrier on our frontier.

To have a clear understanding as to the obstacles that the Governor General had to surmount, in arranging the measures it became incumbent upon him to adopt, with regard to his selection between Shah Shoojah and Dost Mahumud, it is necessary that we should see the Treaty of 1832. We may, however, from the wording of the Manifesto, the substance of

which we have given, conclude that there did not exist any obstacle to an alliance with Dost Mahumud, otherwise Captain Burnes would not have been deputed for the purpose of engaging him to become a party to it, which fact most satisfactorily evinces that he was, when Government determined upon inviting him to become a party to the Treaty, considered as the Sovereign of Cabool; and it further testifies, that our turning round upon him hinged exclusively upon his maintaining the integrity of his right to claim certain concessions from Runjeet Singh, who, from motives of ambition and an aggrandizing propensity, had stripped him and his family of some of the fairest districts belonging to the state of Cabool. Hence the sum total of the grounds of our quarrel with Dost Mahumud is nothing more than our determination that he should not use the means in his power to compel a restitution of his rights. The justice of which we shall not attempt to examine, as it is not capable of defence. We shall merely take a passing glance at the policy, as that will answer our purpose, which is, to arrive at a knowledge of what it was most to our present and future interest to do. Our present interest required an immediate and effectual opposition to the aggressions of Persia, who, acting subordinately to the Councils of Russia, in whose giant grasp she is a mere tool, is actively employed, aided by the underhand advice of Russian Officers, in the reduction of Herat, the entrance into India. It is clear, then, that the power actually in possession of the resources of Afghanistan offered the most immediate and efficient assistance. We learn from Captain Burnes that Dost Mahumud and his family were at the head of the most wealthy and powerful tribe in the country; we see that Dost Mahumud himself was popular, capable, and well-disposed towards us; all of which demonstrates that an alliance with him presented to us the most effectual and immediate assistance that was attainable; and we do not require any proof to convince us, that if Herat had fallen, (and there was every reason for supposing that it could not hold out,) and the Persians had moved onward, we could not have obtained any other. Here it is necessary to ask, was the Treaty of 1832 offensive and defensive; were we

obliged to assist Runjeet Singh, when attacked by a Chief whom he had stripped of a valuable part of his conquests? or were we in such a position, as by our refusing to aid him, to expose ourselves to great hazard? A negative answer, it is presumed, may be safely given to both of these queries, for Runjeet Singh dared not contemplate any hostility against us, aware, as he would have been, that the slightest indication of such an intention would be the signal for the destruction of the power he had reared. It would appear by Captain Burnes' being deputed to obtain Dost Mahumud's accession to the treaty of 1832, that there did not exist any insurmountable obstacle to an alliance with him, although the Treaty may have occasioned the Government very serious embarrassment. And judging by the account given of Dost Mahumud by Captain Burnes, of the number and influence of his clan, of the character of the Afghan nation, and of the repudiated family, together with the peculiar state of affairs, he was the individual that prudence pointed out as the natural Ally of the British Government. Had we allied ourselves with this able soldier, and had Herat fallen, as it was reasonable to suppose it would, we should, by advancing a force of 10,000 men to co-operate with Dost Mahumud, have been more than equal to the task of driving back the Persians, and of maintaining tranquillity to the eastward of the Indus. Let us now reverse the picture, and look at the consequences that might have sprung from the arrangement we have made, if Herat had fallen. The military force of Afghanistan would have joined the victorious army, and thus reinforced, and well supplied, might have marched with little difficulty to the banks of the Indus. In that case we would hardly have considered it prudent to have entered an enemy's country, leaving, as it would have turned out, a concealed enemy, in a pretended friend, in our rear. The Ameer of Sinde is understood to have kept up a private communication with both the Shah of Persia and the ruler of Cabool.

The second motive set forth in the Manifesto was, "to support Runjeet Singh against the ambitious views of Dost Mahumud, and prevent his bringing in the aid of other powers to forward his schemes against the Seikhs." What

right, it will naturally be inquired, had we to interpose force to prevent the Chief of Cabool's obtaining the restitution of districts, of which he was forcibly dispossessed by Runjeet Singh? and by what means his doing so, can be turned into avowed intentions of aggrandizement, and ambitious views, injurious to the security and peace of the frontiers of India, it is not easy to divine, as the inverse of the apprehension would have been the fact. Runjeet, driven back to the eastward of the Indus, and deprived of Cashmere, would have been so shorn of his power, as to render him infinitely less an object of solicitude and regard to the British power, than he now appears to be. As to the flames of war, which "it was naturally to be apprehended would be kindled in the very regions into which we were endeavouring to extend our commerce," they were much more likely to be kindled by leaguings with the Northern Lion to reinstate the exiled Shah, which it is utterly impossible to contemplate accomplishing without a civil war, even supposing Herat capable of withstanding the desperate exertions making to reduce it. Hence, it is evident that our policy was more adapted to feed than to extinguish the flame we so much apprehended. With the Barukzyes for our associates, not a spark would have been seen to the westward of the Indus. The third purpose the Manifesto had in view having been noticed in the consequences of the second, we shall pass on to the fourth: "To oppose the schemes of Persia and preserve Herat." What have we done in furtherance of this design, and how was an alliance with Shah Shoojah calculated to facilitate it? Here again we are left to vague and unsatisfactory conjecture. Herat was invested, and our force was ordered to assemble at Ferozepore, on the left bank of the Hyphasis, about the middle of November, and thence by a south-east direction to Shikarpore, near the Indus, and thence by Candahar on Herat, instead of proceeding direct from Ferozepore by Dera Ismael Khan and Candahar, which would have decreased the march one-third, a matter of vital importance, as the preservation of Herat and the opposition of the Shah of Persia was the avowed object. That we should have permitted any objections raised by Runjeet Singh to have diverted us from our

ostensible purpose, and to have endangered the loss of Herat by ill-timed concession to unwarrantable suspicion, is a matter obnoxious to serious animadversion.* Whereas, an alliance with Dost Mahumud would have enabled us to have pushed immediately forward a strong body of Cavalry, which would, by intercepting and cutting off all supplies, and harassing the besieging army, have proved the most effectual means in our power to have rendered to a place we desired to preserve. We now come to the fifth object: "The desire to render the English name respected throughout Asia." Here is not only a legitimate but a highly laudable motive, but most unfortunately the means employed are diametrically opposite to the end in view.

By upsetting a Government or the authorities (which is the same thing) that have been acknowledged for thirty years, raising a civil war, and traversing the country with hostile armies to depose a Government congenial to the people, does not appear the proper mode of rendering the British name a theme of praise to the population of Central Asia. Is insuring the sway of Runjeet Singh over part of the ancient kingdom of Cabool, by which he perpetuates his exorbitant exactions, a felicitous contrivance to hand the name of our nation through grateful generations to applauding and admiring posterity? Is reinstating the vacillating exile on the throne of his fathers, and maintaining him there by a British force, a means calculated to secure our acts being commemorated by oppressed generations? For, unless the Envoys Extraordinary at the Court of Cabool disgust its sovereigns by their interference, the expense of the establishment will be made the cat's paw for oppressive demands with which the British name will inevitably be associated.

We now come to the sixth and last object: "The establishment of an impregnable barrier on our frontier."

This is certainly not merely a legitimate but an imperative undertaking, and we most devoutly hope that the measures in progress may be attended with perfect success. We at the same time cannot divest ourselves of the conviction, that we

* It is currently reported and believed that Runjeet Singh opposed the march of our troops through his territory.

have neither availed ourselves of the best means, nor made the most of those which we have selected for the present and future security of British India, and the peace and prosperity of Central Asia.

Contemplating our possessions in Asia, in a Political, Commercial, and Military point of view, it can neither have escaped the observer, nor be denied his accordence, that the Indus is the natural boundary of the country lying between that river and the snowy range separating India from Tibet, Nepaul and Bootan. And upon this hypothesis, we shall now proceed to review the policy of the measures we have detailed and commented upon.

The wisdom of establishing, in conjunction with Runjeet Singh, Shah Shoojah upon the throne of Cabool, can only be tried by the advantages that his possession of the kingdom would seem to hold out to the Political, Commercial and Military interests of the British Government, and, as it appears evident that so far from tending to secure the sovereignty of India, which is, after all, the only point for which we should contend, and for which, proceeding to extremities would be justifiable, that the restoration of Shah Shoojah, in conjunction with Runjeet Singh, retards the consolidation of our Indian Empire by organizing and strengthening the means that may hereafter be brought to act against us.

The arrangements we have negociated with the Ruler of the Punjab to insure his co-operation, have no doubt secured to him and his successors the possession of the Provinces he has ravished from the Cabool state. Thus by being secured in an extensive, fertile, and rich country, affording all the appliances of war, he is placed in a frontier position both with regard to the Shah and to ourselves. Now as the fidelity of our Asiatic allies can only be reckoned upon so long as our friendship may serve to uphold their own interests, the very first occasion that may occur, presenting a feasible opening to improve their condition, will be readily taken advantage of.* May not some future Shah of Cabool

* *Extract of a letter from Lord Clive to the Right Hon. W. Pitt.*

"The reigning Subah whom the victory at Plassey invested with the sovereignty of these Provinces, still, it is true, retains his attachment to

and Seikh Rajah secretly conspire to aid each other in enlarging their dominions? May not the former look to the recovery of Herat, and the latter to that of Sindh?—or may the former power not look to the recovery of both those places, and the latter aspire to extend his sway to the southward of the Sutledge? Or is it impossible for Russia still to urge on the Persian King, and support him with an army from the shores of the Caspian or the banks of the Oxus? In consideration of such possible contingencies ought we not to have directed our measures to circumscribe, rather than increase the force of Runjeet Singh, and facilitate our acquisition of the Indus as our western boundary? With the free navigation of that river, and a chain of posts along its banks, our commercial condition would be largely benefited, and our military position rendered impregnable. Nothing short of extreme exigency should have induced Government to swerve from a line of procedure leading to such a desirable end. The consummation of our designs might not be immediately attainable, but that cannot justify our ceasing from steadily and cautiously acting, so as to accelerate, rather than retard, or frustrate, the completion of what must in the end be the result. We have, however, thrown away the golden opportunity, and have commenced organizing an order of things, involving interminable solicitude, and expensive preparation, to say nothing of the flagrant injustice with which we have acted towards Dost Mahumud. Government has apparently proceeded upon a false premise, and must necessarily come to an erroneous conclusion. And such must be the termination of schemes of a temporary and temporising nature. We have compromised the national character, we have compromised our interests, we have elevated an outcast, and have extended and strengthened the hands of one of the powers of India most capable, and most likely to give us future annoyance. An opposite course would have left us at liberty to have taken advantage of the circumstances that

us, and probably, while he has no other support will continue to do so; but Mussulmans are so little influenced by gratitude, that should he ever think it his interest to break with us, the obligations he owes us would prove no restraint."

may arise on the death of Runjeet. It would have avoided the chance of a civil war in Afghanistan. It would have insured us the direction of the concentrated force of that country, for the relief of Herat, and the power of placing whoever we chose upon the throne of Persia, and it would have placed in our hands wherewithal to have retained Runjeet Singh a complying associate, so far as we might find it expedient to employ him. It would have enabled us to dispose of Sinde, as was most advantageous to the parties concerned, and it would have precluded the necessity of endless vexatious interference in the affairs of Afghanistan, and secured the people of that country against impositions, from which they cannot now escape. The contingent must be paid, and it must be employed, under its British Officers, to procure the means, and we shall appear to the inhabitants of Central Asia, the immediate cause of exorbitant exactions, and the upholders of a Government, at variance with the genius of the people.

I shall leave this subject with one more remark; the entire absence of any notice of the prominent (though attempted to be concealed) part the Russian ambassador has taken in the attack of the Shah upon Herat, which is perhaps the most remarkable feature in the document, upon which we have here ventured to make the foregoing observations. The mere attack on Herat by Persia uninstigated by any other counsel than her own, would not excite surprise. Herat, the tributary of Persia, keeps back her tribute, and is in consequence besieged. Nothing more natural and nothing less justifiable upon the part of the British Government can well be imagined than its interfering in the matter. But Herat attacked at the instigation of Russia, and for the notorious purpose of aiding the views that she may have upon Central Asia, alters the case, and that we should shrink from the avowal of the only justifiable motive for our interfering, is indeed beyond all comprehension. We, setting the rights of nations at defiance, openly declare ourselves the enemy of an acknowledged independent ruler, because he unflinchingly adhered to the resolution of legitimately exerting the means he possessed to regain provinces of which he was wrongfully

and forcibly deprived, and abstain, under apprehension of the consequence, from giving publicity to the real motive, that governs our proceedings. The future historian will inform the world of all that has hitherto been kept in the back-ground, and then we shall know, and be able duly to appreciate the policy pursued by the local Government of this country at a period, when it was free to choose between a straightforward and an intricate path. The one leading to certain triumph and increase of fame, involving no risk, while it strengthened our empire, without sacrificing the interests of any independent prince. The other, to doubtful success, involving a compromise of principle, the violation of the acquired rights of nations, combined with a heavy expence and an interminable and vexatious interference in the affairs of Afghanistan.

LETTER III.

15th June, 1

THE review, short and imperfect as it unquestionably which I have taken of the policy that led to the restoration of Shah Shoojah to the throne of Afghanistan, the comment drawn from me by the manifesto of the British Government upon the declaration of our intentions; and the circumstances that induced our selection of the course adopted, at least have served to stimulate those who have paid attention to passing events, or feel an interest in proceedings involving the faith and character of our nation, the security of our dominion, and the happiness of a considerable number of human beings, to institute an inquiry for their own satisfaction, into the cause and object that has produced the momentous measures now in progress; to amass data for the purpose of guiding us, in our future conduct, and point out wherein we have erred, the risks we may be supposed to have incurred, and the consequence which the least failure was calculated to involve.

The motive that gave rise to my writing the papers to which I have just referred, is my sole reason for again taking up my pen.

The public papers will, with some little difference of colouring, have informed the world of the proceeding of our armies, the difficulties they had to encounter from the continued consequences of the natural obstacles met with on their march, and the scarcity of cattle and supplies against which they had to contend, aggravated in no small degree by the opposition of the people of the country through which their route lay.

It is to be hoped that the great good fortune which has hitherto attended our undertaking will bring us safe through

the hazardous and dangerous policy it was deemed expedient to adopt. The Boolan Pass has been cleared, — a position that a few determined men, animated by the spirit of independence or the love of country, might have made rival the Straits of Thermopylæ; and the Shah is said to have been crowned in the city of Candahar, the metropolis of the province bearing that name.

While affairs in Afghanistan are proceeding unopposed to the goal, an event is about to occur that may change the bright hopes which at present are entertained of ultimate success.

Runjeet Singh, the prime mover of the doubtful occurrences that are now passing, is reported to be in the last stage of his mortal career, insensible of the approaching storm, which, according to the skill and firmness with which it is encountered, will confirm or dismember an Empire raised by talent, intrigue, industry, and courage.

To all human appearance, imminent danger hangs over our dominions. The fiat that decides the fate of contending nations cannot be long delayed; but I doubt not that our energy and moral courage will rise in proportion with the difficulties with which we are involved.

Had we availed ourselves of the implements we found ready, we might possibly have had but little to apprehend or struggle with, and left still less room for the policy in which we have acted, being questioned. But as the die has been cast, we must stand the hazard; yet it may not be too late to endeavour to provide against occurrences which, if they take place, cannot but produce disastrous consequences.

Before detaching so large an army to such a distance, exposed to many contingencies against which it was impossible to provide, it might have appeared expedient that measures should have been adopted to secure us, as much as possible, from the effects that any untoward event to the westward of the Indus was sure to involve. For this purpose it seems that the Burmese barbarian usurper ought to have been put down, and our supremacy in that country rendered unassailable, which could have been accomplished with little trouble or expence. It is not now too late: the interest of

the legitimate king is still great, and there is but little doubt that our declaring in his favour, would lead to the mass of the population rising against a tyranny reported to be hateful to all classes. Of the justice, policy, and necessity of such a course there can be little doubt; neither will the circumstances of the moment favour the period for action being deferred. Of the justice it is hardly necessary to say a word; the whole nation being understood to desire the restoration of the ex-King. Of the policy, there can be little doubt, as its adoption would have been attended by immediate security along a line of frontier offering every facility for invasion. Of the necessity, those who are acquainted with the present critical situation of affairs, cannot require information. It will, therefore, suffice in this place to call the attention of the public to our actual position, a knowledge of which will be more effectual in enabling it to decide, than any individual opinion could prove.

At the present juncture we have a large force at a fearful distance from our frontier, weakened in power and decreased in number by the privations it has undergone, and separated from India by a country full of difficulties, and abounding in strong passes, susceptible of easy defence, at little hazard, and yielding nothing for the support of a hostile army.

The intentions of Dost Mahumud are not distinctly developed; and his means of opposition, although known to be trifling, cannot prudently be deemed contemptible.

The condition of Runjeet Singh is such, as renders his existence so precarious, that a few days may remove him from a scene in which he has long acted a principal part; such an event would probably be followed by a struggle for supremacy among his immediate descendants, and the unsettled state of Afghanistan is highly favourable to such a contest; while the part we may have bound ourselves to take, would most probably preclude our reinforcing the army of the Indus, should such a measure become advisable. We know the internal state of Nepaul; we have positive proof of the hostile intentions of the prevailing party in the Councils of Katmandoo, and of the active preparations for war that are now in progress, and we are not unacquainted with the

persevering industry with which the emissaries of this state are endeavouring to induce the powers of Western and Central India, to coalesce against our sway.

We are also assured that our forbearing to punish the arrogant and contumacious conduct of the Burmese Usurper, has created in the neighbouring states the deep conviction of our inability to control his disobedience, or chastise his audacity.

In such a state of things, there can hardly be a doubt, but that the slightest untoward occurrence in Afghanistan, or any contention in the Punjab, on the demise of its present able and celebrated ruler, would be the signal for those who are disposed and prepared, as above-stated, to break out into open hostility against our power. The feelings inimical to the interests of the British Government that exist in the Courts of Katmandoo and Ava, are perhaps the most serious consequences against which we have at this moment to provide. Any disaster in Afghanistan would, as has been observed, be followed by an immediate break out in the above countries. Hence it would seem advisable that as little time as may be, should be lost in placing those countries in such position as would effectually preclude the apprehension of danger from their enmity, when our undivided attention and exertions were required in another quarter.

Evincing contempt for a foe, who really possesses the means of doing injury, does not appear to be the course that wisdom would dictate, or prudence adopt, merely because the state was considered in the light of a barbarian power and unworthy of notice. The true criterion for judging such a foe would be, to calculate his power to do harm. If he be found to have power, or the means of obtaining power, which is the same thing, it would be unwise to despise that power, because it was considered uncivilised. It has been said, that we ought to abstain from noticing the acts of insult offered by such a power, and rest satisfied with repelling and punishing such acts of aggression as may be committed. If we could be certain of always having it in our power so to act, I should not dispute the doctrine that laid down the rule. But until we shall be guaranteed the means

of resenting and repelling such acts on the spur of the occasion, I cannot acquiesce in the wisdom of refraining from the adoption of measures to guard against mischief, while we have the means of securing ourselves, upon the untenable ground of our adversary being beneath our regard.

Great events involve great responsibility—the former cannot be achieved without the latter being incurred. The Government of India, situated as it now is, must not shrink from incurring a responsibility necessary to secure a happy completion of the great measures in progress. A line of policy has been taken, the design must be worked out, or so far finished as not to admit of danger being engendered by what has already been done. Any failure consequent upon want of decision or delay in action will be thrown upon the local authorities. They are consequently called upon by a regard for their own fame, and the well-being of the empire committed to their charge, to assume a power that can alone preserve their reputation and the state over whose destinies they preside. In accordance with this view, and the feelings and sentiments that have dictated it, I would presume to advocate every exertion (regardless of responsibility) that might be found necessary to crush the combinations now in progress, before they were so far completed as seriously to endanger the safety of the British rule.

Our situation at this moment is perhaps as critical as in any anterior period of our history, and so far as human sagacity can penetrate into futurity, nothing short of energetic and decided measures, can conduct us through a course which it has been considered expedient to adopt.

The measure, as a political one, appears faulty, inasmuch as it tended to coalesce the powers in possession of Afghanistan against us, and unite the interests of the influential chiefs of that country with those of Persia, under the secret dictation of Russia, at a time when the fall of Herat, to human perception, was inevitable.

As a just measure, it may be deemed questionable, which is proved by our having offered to negotiate with Dost Mahumud, as the *de facto* ruler of Cabool, on the condition of his agreeing to acknowledge the right of Runjeet Singh to

the districts wrested from the Doorannees by fraud or by force. Our army, destined to support a measure founded on so doubtful a policy, has encountered privations that have rendered it inefficient. Our cavalry branch of the force has suffered severely, and the horses and carriage cattle of the army, been rendered all but unserviceable from starvation. When the details connected with the sufferings and march of the army shall become known, when the nearly disorganized state of the force shall be published, when its inefficiency, from loss of horses, cattle, and want of provisions, shall be proclaimed, the public will then be enabled to come to a decision upon the merits of this expedition into Afghanistan.

It has been remarked, in another part of this paper, that if Runjeet Singh should die before our Cabool expedition has performed its task, the consequences may be most serious. There would, most probably, a struggle take place, for the succession to the throne of the Punjab; in which case the discontented Chiefs of Afghanistan, led on by Dost Mahumud, would not fail to adopt the cause of the competitor opposed to the individual recognized by the British power. Such an occurrence would certainly precipitate the break out of the Nepaulese and Burmese, accompanied by a simultaneous demonstration of a hostile spirit in Western and Central India. In such a case, where should we seek for one to quell the revolt excited by our Afghan policy? Can the power that raised the storm allay it? Could the Army of the Indus in its present predicament—Cavalry unserviceable for want of horses; fighting men inefficient for want of food—Artillery and carriage cattle incomplete and unserviceable; could (I again ask) such a force make head against an animated attack headed by Dost Mahumud, aided by a Seikh Prince contending for empire, under every impulse calculated to rouse the energies of man? We should reflect and make our preparations, while we have yet time. Let us here inquire what means we possess, whence our preparation can be made. In what condition is our Army? The result of such an inquiry, will, it is feared, be the knowledge that we must depend exclusively upon our own resources. Allies,

capable of coming forward and willing to do so, we have none. The Oude Treasury has been cleared out, the stores of Saadut Allee all exhausted, and the agricultural population of the country destroyed, by a systematically oppressive Government, and the profligacy of the last King. There no longer remain crores of rupees to be borrowed at 4 per cent., nor a population from which a revenue can be raised, without proceedings, iniquitous in principle, and destructive in practice. In our own country, too, there will be considerable defalcation of revenue, the consequence of the widely prevailing famine of last year, and the entire stoppage put to our opium monopoly, by the tardy, but energetic and effective measures of the Government, whose subjects have become demoralized, through its vitiating tendency. This sudden contraction of our means of supply, at the moment when our disbursements must necessarily become great, will, it may be apprehended, cramp our exertions. In taking a survey of our Army, we find it so attenuated to meet the demands of the state, as to render it scarcely possible to assemble an effective force, in any four or five positions along an extensive frontier, without leaving the vast area of our internal dominions utterly unprotected—and such forces, when assembled, are comparatively inefficient, from the great want of that which can alone fit them for active offensive operations in the field. The European Officers attached to the Bengal Infantry, which comprises seventy-six Regiments, including two European Regiments, amount to 1480; of which number, in January this year, there were absent on furlough and staff, 619, which comes to within 120 of half the whole complement. In the Cavalry branch of the Bengal Army, there are 200 Officers; out of these there were in January last 95 absent, which is within 5 of half the complement; and the Artillery, consisting of 200, are in nearly a like condition. Is this a state of things consistent with the interest that is at stake?

If the Cabool chief retreats into the mountains, or if he should retire into Bokhara or Persia, our Army must, for the present, remain in Afghanistan. An attempt to move it, would be the signal for his return, and the dethronement of

the impotent king would soon follow. In the mean time, if the contemplated contest on the death of Runjeet Singh should take place, and the Nepaulese and the Burmese break out, is it unlikely that the Afghan would take advantage of our having so much to occupy our attention, to seize the favourable opportunity that offered to attack, with some hopes of success, the crippled force left to sustain his aged enemy upon a throne, he never, even in his youth, evinced capacity to uphold?

Considering the measures that led to the invasion of Afghanistan, in all their bearings, and with every indulgence, the principle upon which they were founded appears in its present operations unjust, and in its future consequences tends to the disturbance of that security in Afghanistan, the tranquillity of which we professed to have so much at heart.

It may be argued that the Local Government had no alternative but that of associating its interests with those of Shah Shoojah and Runjeet Singh, and that policy and good faith concurred to prescribe the course which has been adopted. But hitherto nothing has emanated from the press to establish such a position; on the contrary, all our former proceedings in this affair, distinctly, and in an incontrovertible manner, shows that Lord William Bentinck considered and treated the desire and attempts of the exiled Doorannee to regain his throne, as a matter quite unconnected with the interests of the British Government. A reference to the documents published by the House of Commons will fully corroborate this. In October, 1831, Lord William Bentinck informs the Shah, that he will not aid him in his contemplated expedition; that non-interference is the basis of our policy; but that his family shall not be neglected during his absence.*

In November, 1831, Captain Wade, our Agent with the Seikh States, forwards to his own Government copies of notes that passed between Shah Shoojah and Runjeet Singh, on the subject of the former's desire to attempt the recovery

* The Shah and his family were residing in the British territory, supported by our bounty.

of his dominions. In No. I. of these papers the Shah extols the Seikh as the greatest personage of the age, one that only requires the additional title of "*restorer of kings*" to complete his renown; and offers him Cashmere, Peshawur, and other countries under his authority, if *he* will bestow the remainder of the kingdom upon him. In March, 1833, Mr. Secretary Macnaghten informed the British Agent at Delhi, that the British Government would not interfere with the projected plan of Shah Shoojah, but that no injury from it was apprehended to their own interests, or to those of the Chief of Lahore, which were considered to be identical. In April, Runjeet Singh was acquainted that the attempts of the Shah were beheld with indifference by the British Government.

From the foregoing, two important facts are clearly deducible: first, that in 1833 the restoration of the Shah, through our instrumentality, was *deemed* quite *inadmissible*; indeed, his ex-Highness had been explicitly informed that *non-interference* was the *basis of our policy*. Secondly, that his restoration was a matter of indifference to us. It is therefore incumbent that we show cause for the change that has taken place in the fundamental rule, non-interference, of our Government, and the more difficult task of demonstrating the advantage that would accrue to the British Government, from the abandonment, in the present instance, of the basis upon which Lord William professed our Government to be founded. Have we a right to imagine an Utopian system of Government for our neighbours, and proceed in a Don Quixote manner to enforce our philanthropic interference in the affairs of countries independent of our sway? We must here look a little at the principle of non-interference of which we have lately heard so much. Those who are living at a distance from the scenes of action will naturally conclude that we are a most strict and honourable people, who religiously abstain from interfering with our neighbours, allies, or dependents. Alas! how little is known of this non-interfering principle, and how little is it regarded. Of this, if other proof were wanting, our Afghan policy would furnish superabundant evidence; but unfortunately it is not required. Our history from the Maharatta Ditch to Hindu Koh, from

the Persian Gulf to Chinese Tartary, abundantly testifies that interference has been the mighty instrument by which we have raised ourselves from insignificance to the most dominant power in Asia. Let the histories of the Courts of Moorshedabad, Benares, and Lucknow, be referred to. Let the history of Mysore, Hyderabad, and Rajwarrah be examined, and then talk of non-interference. Have we not at will put up and dethroned kings, made and abrogated treaties, as our occasions rendered such measures expedient? And does not our policy in the invasion of Afghanistan crown our unscrupulous interference, while in the act of preaching the opposite doctrine? To do our duty, we must interfere: but we should do so with caution.* In the

* It may not, in this place, be considered irrelevant to shew that our principle of interference is partial in its nature, uncertain in its operations, and baneful in its consequences. If there be any matter involving the political convenience, or the pecuniary advantage of the British Government, we have unhesitating resort to interference. But should it be required to secure the rights of others, and should its application involve trouble and prove inconvenient, it is sedulously avoided as being inconsistent with the dignity of independent sovereignty, and at variance with the principle upon which we act towards our allies. An instance of each case may satisfactorily illustrate the system that has been established. In Rajpootana we are bound to protect the different subsidiary Rajahs, for which we either receive six annas in the rupee, or a fixed stipulated sum. The security which the several Princes enjoy, enables them to oppress their subjects beyond endurance, yet we do not think ourselves called upon to interfere, although the power whence the oppression flows, is derived from and upheld by British authority. The moment we are touched, or our interests affected, we are prompt, not only to interfere, but to dictate the measures that may be considered expedient.

When it was found expedient to extend our Opium monopoly over Central India, for the purpose of protecting our Bengal Opium trade from the rivalry of the Parsee merchants of Bombay, the Political Officers at the various Durbars in Central India were directed to negotiate Opium arrangements with the several Courts, to secure the produce to a certain extent, and to prohibit the culture of a quantity in excess of that agreed to be taken by the paramount power. To facilitate these arrangements, a price double the ordinary rate was agreed to be given for a quantity of Opium less by one-half or one-third than what was usually grown. The more readily to secure the hearty co-operation of the Local Governments the several authorities were allowed

present case, will interference tend to our safety? It is feared not. We have passed our natural boundary, we have made arrangements with Runjeet Singh inimical to our interests, and opposed to that policy which it was obviously our interest to pursue. We are now so situated, that every breath that ruffles the surface of any part of the policy of Asia, must be felt throughout the British Empire. Instead of reposing in security to the eastward of the Indus, we have crossed the line of our natural defence, and, bitterly it is feared, we shall be compelled to bewail the views that directed the adoption of this course.*

15th July. Some public documents have been received from England by the mail for May, since the foregoing pages were written, which renders it expedient to add a few obser-

a bonus, to be paid out of the profit of our Opium sales; the chiefs being bound to prevent the illegal transit of the drug through their territories.

The consequences were such as might have been foreseen. Some of the Opium ground was thrown out of cultivation, and the ryots involved in distress. Smuggling was carried on to a fearful extent, and the drug escorted by armed bands, organized to oppose the troops of their legal sovereigns, was forcibly escorted through the states of Rajpootana. Here we see interference of the most pernicious character, producing the most fearful results; subjects armed against constituted authority, human life sacrificed, and misrule perpetuated to support the most flagitious interference. What is the consequence of all our subsidiary alliances, but an interference baneful to the people? See the condition of Oude, of Hydrabad, of Rajwarrah. Are not the local authorities in those states upheld by British bayonets? Are we not then bound by every moral tie to prevent the abuse of a power that we support? Interference should be carefully avoided where it did not involve a sacrifice of duty; and should, when resorted to, be exercised with discretion, and under heavy responsibility.

* One singular and important advantage has been derived from our proceedings. The knowledge that no invading army could reach India by the Candahar route in a condition that would enable it to maintain itself for a week against a moderately equipped and efficient force. The great scarcity of provisions, added to the natural obstacles that exist throughout the country, are such as not to be overcome in the presence of an active enemy. The condition in which our army arrived at Candahar, aided as it was by all the means at the disposal of our vast influence, affords satisfactory data for our future calculations.

vations to what has already been said upon the subject of our Afghan policy.

There cannot, it is imagined, be the slightest difference of opinion, as to the necessity for the adoption of a prompt and efficient course by the Government of India, to anticipate and provide against the notoriously known intrigues of Russia with all the states between her Asiatic conquests and the frontiers of the British power in India. The only doubts admitting of discussion would seem to rest upon the selection of the means which presented themselves to us; and in making the selection, it would seem fair to adopt as our guide a consideration of the consequences, present and ulterior, likely to spring from that selection.

The impressions that influenced my reasoning upon the above subject in my first letter, remain unchanged by the matter contained in the letters from the Governor General of India to the Secret Committee of the Directors, and his correspondence with Ameer Dost Mahumud and Captain Burnes; and that officer's communication with Dost Mahumud, and the information given by him to the Governor General, of the Russian influence, exerted to draw the Chief of Cabool over to the views of the Russian Government.

By these documents we learn two things. The basis upon which Dost Mahumud would enter into negotiation with us; and his determination to seek Russian and Persian support in event of not being able to obtain our concurrence with his wishes. This naturally leads us to examine the terms upon which the Afghan was desirous to ally himself with us, and those which we could effect with Shah Shoojah. How far our actual connection with the Ruler of the Punjab left us free to decide upon the policy of our Candahar proceedings and the means that either selection would bring into active and immediate operation for the defence of Afghanistan. Then to look at the consequences of rejecting Dost Mahumud or the Shah, and those likely to result from the arrangements into which we have entered. After which it may be beneficial to take a general view of the nature of our Government, and of the change that is in progress with regard to its external relations and its means of defence. It appears by Dost

Mahumud's letters to Lord Auckland and his communications to Captain Burnes,* that he desired the restitution of Peshawur, the cradle as it were of his family, and the general protection of Afghanistan, to be conceded as the basis of our negotiation, which was rejected by the Governor General on the ground of our relations with Runjeet Singh. The Ameer was at the same time informed that he might retain what he then possessed. Upon this all the negotiations ceased, and Dost Mahumud threw himself into the arms of the Russian Agent, which were open to receive him.

The terms of our negotiation with the Shah would seem to have been dictated by the Maharaja; as we find in the tripartite treaty concluded at Lahore 25th June, 1838, nearly the substance of the Treaty entered into by the Shah and Runjeet Singh on the 12th of March, 1834, at a period when we sedulously declined interfering in the affairs of Afghanistan, from which it is inferable that we either approved of the terms dictated by Runjeet Singh in 1834, or that we could not induce him to take the part we desired he should act in 1839. The terms of the treaty of Lahore reduces the Shah nearly to the quality of a vassal of the Punjab.

* See Captain Burnes's letter to Mr. Secretary Macnaghten, 5th October, 1837, detailing the Ameer's desire to hold Peshawur under Lahore. See also his letter 31st of October, communicating the most moderate and just views of Dost Mahumud, and displaying a most tractable disposition. By another letter, dated 26th January, 1838, we learn that Dost Mahumud would have been satisfied with being secured against the designs of his brother Sultan Mahumud Khan; and in a letter dated the 13th March, he states the Ameer's demands; the protection of Cabool and Candahar from Persia; the surrender of Peshawur; the protection in that city of those who returned to it from Cabool; and in the detail accompanying Captain Burnes's letter above quoted, he distinctly states that Dost Mahumud agreed to live upon friendly terms with Runjeet Singh; respect the independence of Candahar and of Peshawur; and co-operate in arrangements to unite the Barukzye family. Unfortunately these good resolutions, not being supported by any positive expectations held out by our Agent, Captain Vickovitch and the Persian faction prevailed and seduced the Ameer from a determination to rely upon the British Government, to which he would most likely have adhered, had he had any moderately adequate inducement held out to him.

The first article of this document strips him of some of the fairest districts of the Empire, viz. Cashmere with the Fort of Attock, Chuck Hezora, Khebel, Amb, with its dependencies on the left bank of the aforesaid river; on the right bank Peshawur with the Ejupai territory, Khelehs, Hisht Nazir, Mechae, Khehat, Himgoo, and all the places dependent on Peshawur, as far as the Khyber Pass, Benno, the Vizini territory, Dour, Trank, Goran, Kalabagh, and Kushal Ghur, with their dependent districts; Deral Ismail Khan and its dependency, together with Dera Gazee Khan, Kat Mithan, Osmar Kote, and their dependent territory, Singhur, Herea, Dujub, Hujipore, Kajenpore, and the three Ketches as well as Mankera, with its district, and the provinces of Mooltan situated on the left bank. These places comprise the whole of the fertile plains lying between the Soleman mountains and the Indus, from Khyber to the conflux of the Sutledge, being more than $2\frac{1}{2}$ of latitude and from 50 to 30 miles in width, being by far the richest and most productive portion of the Afghan dominions.

The 5th Article provides for the annual present of 55 of the best horses, 11 scimitars, 7 poniards, 25 mules, fruits of various kinds, dry and fresh, satins of every colour, kimkhab, furs, and a Persian carpet.

The 8th Article provides some presents from the Maharaja by way of friendship, consisting of shawls, clothes, and rice.

The 10th Article precludes the slaughter of horned cattle when the armies may chance to be together.

The 11th Article provides for the plunder taken from the Barukzyes Dost Mahumud's clan by the aid of the Seikhs to be equally divided, and if all taken without their aid, a part to be sent to the Maharaja.

The 13th Article provides for one of the Shah's sons waiting upon Runjeet Singh whenever he may visit Peshawur.

The 15th Article binds the Shah to pay two lakhs of rupees annually to the Maharaja for a force of 5,000 men, cavalry and infantry, when required, and the British Government guarantee this payment.

The 16th Article provides, on the part of the Shah, all supremacy over the Ameers of Sinde, and all claims of arrears

of tribute due by them, on the condition that they pay to him a sum to be determined by the British Government, out of which 15,00,000 Rs. to be paid to the Maharaja.

The 17th Article provides for the security of Kamran in Herat.

The 18th Article precludes the Shah's entering into negotiation with any power contrary to the British and Seikh States.

Being ignorant of the terms of our Treaties with Runjeet Singh when the foregoing Treaty with the Shah, to which we are a party, was framed, it is impossible to say how far the British Government may have been pledged to further the Maharaja's schemes,* but judging of our independence of him by the document above glanced at, it would seem that he must have been considered to have been in a position, which enabled him to forward, or frustrate all the measures we might find it convenient to adopt, to secure our frontiers against the machinations of the Czar; otherwise, it is impossible to believe, that in restoring the Shah to his former throne for the avowed purpose of warding off future evil from ourselves, we should so have acted as to render him incapable of performing the duty for which he was elevated to the seat but not to the power of his predecessors.

Viewing Afghanistan as a Federal power, and each state in possession of its legitimate rights, and connected with the British Government by subsidiary treaties, securing to each the control of its affairs, and the maintenance of a specified force under British Officers, we shall perceive it to be every way adequate to its own defence, with very little trouble or expence to the British Government. But as a Monarchy denuded of its most fertile and productive provinces, and placed to a certain extent in a state of vassalage to the Ruler of the Punjab, we can neither expect energetic nor hearty co-operation in matters connected with the well-

* It would appear by the documents recently published by the House of Commons, that existing treaties with the ruler of the Punjab did not bind us to aid him in retaining possession of the country conquered from the Afghans.

being of the British or Seikh Government, unless they involve the safety of the Cabool State.

Rejecting the alliance of Dost Mahumud will, it is feared, if he is not induced to come to terms with the Shah, be attended by considerable expense, and what is of more importance, will cause much delay in the perfecture of the measures necessary for restoring order and establishing harmony in Afghanistan, and undivided submission to Shah Shoojahool-Moolk's authority; so long as Dost Mahumud continues to separate himself from the new order, and finds an asylum and protection among the neighbouring chiefs, we shall be necessitated to retain an adequate force at Cabool, composed partly of the British and partly of the Seikh troops, until the Shah has organized and disciplined a force on whose fidelity he can depend, for the protection of his person and the defence of his kingdom. These necessary arrangements will require funds; and as Afghanistan is unable to supply them, the British Government, for whose benefit the restoration of the Shah was intended, will be obliged to find the required resources. The time that may elapse before Dost Mahumud shall have been brought over, or been subjugated, is the only criterion by which the expence and anxiety that hangs upon uncertainty can be measured, and as that cannot be ascertained, it is impossible to speculate with any near approximation to truth upon what may prove the result of our rejecting him as an ally.

The consequences of rejecting Shah Shoojah were susceptible of easy calculation. There would, probably, have been great discontent on the part of Runjeet Singh, and a most reluctant restitution of Peshawur, and all the country westward of the Indus; and perhaps a demonstration of meditated hostile resistance, or an actual resort to arms to avert the alternative, might have been the result of our determination to exact the restitution as a condition necessary for a final and equitable settlement between the Rulers of Afghanistan and the Punjab: an essential preliminary for the permanent tranquillization of the former state and the ultimate security of the British dominions in the East.

The consequence of the policy that has influenced the

arrangements entered into with the Shah and Maharaja, cannot at this juncture be clearly delineated, as they depend upon circumstances at this moment beyond the scope of our inquiry.* We, however, can see sufficiently into futurity to enable us to estimate with tolerable precision the feelings and sentiments that are likely to arise in the mind and bosom of the Afghan monarch after he has been placed in actual possession of what remains of his former kingdom, and has time to reflect on the conditions to which he has subscribed, and the means of which he may find himself possessed to fulfil them. He will probably perceive, after the first ebullitions of joy shall have subsided that agitated his mind on his restoration, when he comes to organize his administration and regulate his finances, that he has given up so much of his paternal dominions, that sufficient has not been reserved for the adequate support of the indispensable regalia of his august situation, and the suitable maintenance of his family, to enable him to pay the British contingent and the force required for the current duties of his kingdom, without exacting more from his subjects than they are capable of

* It would perhaps be thought premature in this place to inquire into the right or otherwise of Persia, and Russia, to assume the privilege of considering themselves entitled to interfere in the affairs of Afghanistan, on the plea of the treaties entered into by the Ameers of Candahar and Cabool. It is true we call them intrigues, but they may fairly be considered to come under the term treaty. M. Vickovitch certainly induced the chief of Cabool to attach himself to Russia, and we cannot possibly disprove the legitimacy of Russian interference to aid the restoration of her ally. Persia may be considered to stand in the same relation to both the principalities, and if Russia entertains the intention and possesses the means, there is not any moral barrier to her exercising her discretion, as to the measures to be adopted in favour of the Candahar and Cabool chiefs. To have cut such ground from under her feet, was one considerable inducement for our allying ourselves with the *de facto* rulers. The difficulty we should have found in reconciling conflicting interests, replacing distrust and animosity by confidence and amity, would not have been a more onerous and delicate task than that which we have undertaken. Moreover, the undisputed right that such a connection would have given us to watch over, regulate, and arbitrate all the affairs of Afghanistan, would have been cheaply achieved at the labour consequent on the undertaking.

contributing without suffering privations uncongenial to their democratic and turbulent habits. He may, too, discover, or it may be pointed out to him by others, that the terms of the engagement into which he has entered, tend to place him on the scale of Asiatic sovereigns, considerably below the successors of the sovereign who humbled the pride and reduced the power of his nation. How far such discoveries may dispose the present Shah and his successors to remain contentedly in their new position, and faithfully perform the obligations to which Shah Shoojah was compelled to subscribe, can alone be developed by time; we may, however, without incurring great hazard of being proved wrong, give expression to the apprehension, that when some young and ardent mind succeeds to the throne of Cabool, circumstances will not be wanting to awaken it to a just appreciation of the reduced and subservient position in which the genius and ascendancy of Runjeet Singh has placed his family. Neither is it improbable that occasions will occur to dispose him to lend an attentive ear to such plans and propositions as may be urged upon his consideration for the recovery of those possessions, and that power, of which he will never cease to believe he has been deprived by a combination of events, which enabled the Seikh power to take advantage of the misfortunes of his house, to aggrandize itself at the price of their humiliation. In the temper of mind that such reflections and convictions are well calculated to engender, is it to be expected that the Cabool Chief will continue proof against the arts and offers by which he may be beset, to engage him in intrigues, the success of which it will be asserted must restore to him the provinces and the power over the loss of which he broods? Surely such virtue is not to be looked for in an Afghan Prince, and surely it would have been well to have avoided a crisis that is consistent with the present order of things, and the feelings of human nature.

The present condition of the British possessions in this country, and the means we have of preserving them, merit some reflection, as the views and ideas of every individual who has had any experience of Indian affairs, or who has given

the subject any serious reflection, however imperfect or confined they may be, cannot fail to prove useful to those, whose duty it is to watch over and preserve our colonies. By weighing and maturely deliberating upon the result of the experience of those who have resided in distant countries, statesmen, who are necessarily confined to the mother-country, are enabled to take that comprehensive view of great questions, that a long and intimate acquaintance with the subject can alone call forth. Under this impression the writer of this paper feels less reluctance than he would otherwise do, in publishing his views of recent transactions.

The measures which the notoriously known, and recently detected designs of Russia on India, have forced upon the Governor General, have drawn us into a position which will expose our empire in this country to be affected by every question that agitates the cabinets of London and St. Petersburg. The frontiers of our government having necessarily, from the change that has been effected in our relations with the Cabool state, become more susceptible to impressions from the enmity of Russia and her allies or dependants, it materially concerns us so to arrange our internal affairs, as to enable us, without incurring risk, to pour the main portion of our offensive means upon any part of our frontier that may be threatened from without, or so to distribute them in large bodies throughout our empire, as to enable us to assemble an ample and well-equipped army in any direction that circumstances may demand its presence. I must here remark, that nothing can be more fallacious than the expectation, that our native allies and dependants would rally round our standard in the hour of danger. We have the concurrent evidence of several periods of public exigency, testifying that our necessities would engender combinations to secure our expulsion. With this experience, and the knowledge of the efforts that have, upon the present occasion, been made, to associate the powers of India in hostile array against our sway; it would be futile to place confidence in, or indulge expectations from any other quarter than our own resources. Upon them only we ought to depend; and to render them equal to the defence of our frontier, and the maintenance of our internal

peace should be the object of our most earnest and unceasing deliberation.

With a view to effect this, it is incumbent upon the local authorities to take a calm and comprehensive view of every branch and department of our Eastern Government, and to suggest such revisions and additions as may, after mature consideration, appear to its judgment essential to establish and maintain the prosperity and security of our dominion. It no less behoves the authorities in Europe to divest their minds of every prejudice that conduces to the retention of partialities to one service more than another, or to any class of servants, as few things are more destructive to an efficient government than the existence of petty feelings of envy and jealousy among its servants. Above all, rules, regulating the relative rank of the officers of the crown, and the Indian army, ought to be drawn up and adhered to with undeviating exactness. There should not be anything connected with their rank left to the discretion of the local authorities: as all that they require is a sufficiently large field from which to select for any particular service; for making such selections, fitness should be the ruling principle. The present state of the Indian army demands special attention. A cursory glance will be sufficient to convince the inquirer of its inefficiency, and its inadequacy with regard to numerical strength for the duty it has to perform. The efficiency of native regiments depends exclusively upon their European officers; deprived of them, they are not better than the troops of a native state. The full complement of officers should be kept up, which can only be done by having a staff corps. The practice which necessity has created and maintains of permitting, or ordering officers to join their regiments from staff situations, at a time when their services are required, and returning to their appointments when no longer called for in the field, is at once cruel and unjust to the regimental officers who do all the work of the army. There are many other important matters that call for the deep and serious reflection of the Court of Directors, but this paper has already run to too great a length.

Note.—Since these sheets have been written, it has been ascertained that the right of Persia over Herat is incontestible; that the intention to act upon it has been known since December, 1835, at least. With this right (guaranteed to Persia by three treaties) it is not to be supposed that she would, under Russian influence, be brought to relinquish her pretension. It is singular that we should aid in depriving Afghanistan of the most valuable portion of its remaining possessions, at a moment when it was apparent she must be considered as our chief outwork and guard against invasion; whether we retained the *de facto* rulers, or restored the exile. The maintenance of Afghanistan, in an efficient state would seem to be of primary importance, especially as, in May, 1836, it was known that Persia considered Dost Mahumud as a subject, and was bent upon forming intimate connections with that power. To the danger arising out of which, Mr. Ellis, our Envoy in Persia, called the serious attention of His Majesty's Ministers and the Court of Directors, in the face of which we restore Shah Shoojah and force Dost Mahumud into the arms of his legitimate Sovereign, and thereby rivet the claims of Persia to the feudal superiority over Cabool, and the right of Russia, as an ally, to aid her attempts to recover her just pretensions of liege lord,—a policy that no ulterior success can legitimate or justify.

In 1836, Candahar acknowledged the controlling authority of Persia, and in 1838, in repudiating our favoured child, Non-interference, we adopt a course opposed to our best interests.

LETTER IV.

15th October, 1839.

OUR Afghanistan campaign has been brought to a successful, and so far as the conduct of the troops are concerned, we may say, a glorious termination. Few armies had to encounter greater difficulties, or sustain more privation. The country through which it marched, may be said to have hardly been known; its inhabitants, hardy and brave by nature, rude and barbarous by habit, opposed its advance (so far as a constant desultory mode of plundering may be termed opposition,) every mile over which it marched, cutting off supplies, carrying off the carriage cattle, and offering to its progress every obstacle, but that of the sword.

Fortune, however, never deserted us; and our measures have so far been successful, that we have placed the Shah upon his throne. And who, it may be asked, ever doubted our ability to accomplish that which we undertook to perform?—be it so. But the question as to the policy of selecting Shah Shoojah, instead of Dost Mahumud, remains to be proved. In addition to the arguments brought forward in my first two letters, I have now the result of the campaign to adduce in support of the view taken in the letters, to which I have referred. The obstacles which our Army had surmounted in its march from Shikarpore to Candahar, reduced it to a condition that might have rendered serious opposition, a disastrous event; but as they have been made pretty generally known by letters from individuals with the Army, published in the Calcutta, Agra, and Delhi papers, I shall not notice them in this place.

The policy that dictated the preference given to Shah Shoojah is now upon its trial, and how far the course adopted

has compensated for the sacrifice of the right of the then *de facto* rulers of Afghanistan, the sequel must unfold. If continued collision with other powers, and the most strenuous and unceasing opposition to our projects were contemplated, they have indeed been realized, and will be experienced for a longer period than may possibly be contemplated. But it is evident no such fears were entertained, for we learn from Sir John Keane's dispatches, that he had not any expectation of resistance at Ghuznee, till actually under the fire of its cannon, which opened on his army in the ordinary order of march. So little prepared does he appear to have been for what was about to take place, that he did not even bring on his battering train, and was consequently placed in the awkward dilemma of either attempting to take a strong and well-garrisoned place by a *coup de main*, or of investing it and sending back to Candahar for heavy ordnance; both alternatives being full of uncertainty and danger; the failure of the first, involving the immediate and total defeat of the policy adopted, and the all but certain destruction of the army. For it cannot be contended that the failure of the attack upon Ghuznee would not have served to combine and concentrate the whole force of Afghanistan in hostile array against us. We have seen that Dost Mahumud was prepared to oppose us with 11,000 men and 28 pieces of Artillery, that his son had 3,000 men in Ghuznee, that there was a body of 2,000 Cavalry outside the Fort under another son, and 800 good horses in the Fort, ready to be mounted. The whole of this Force would have immediately closed on our rear, and every chief who might be watching the tide of affairs, would at once have declared himself an enemy to those who were about to place by force an exiled Monarch upon a throne, for the occupation of which he had been found totally unfit. That the foregoing is no trite speculation, has been abundantly proved by events that defy contradiction. Did not Haji Khan, the first Chief of any note, who, in Eastern phraseology, kissed the stirrup of his impotent Lord, when surrounded by a British force, seize the earliest opportunity of demonstrating the real sentiments and feelings by which his mind and heart were anima-

ted? Was it not through the devotion, (by us called treachery) of Haji Khan, that Dost Mahumud was enabled to escape the outstretched arm of his pursuers, and as a punishment for his conduct on that occasion, he, with ten other Chiefs of distinction, are destined to be immured in our Indian prisons, leaving feelings in the bosom of their tribes, that even British influence will fail to subdue? Does not the conduct of the population show the opinion entertained of the British interference in behalf of a man who is held in general contempt? Can our officers, or those attached to our Force, move beyond the limits of our camp without imminent danger to their lives? In addition to the large force raised by, and confided to the care of British Officers, have we not been compelled to maintain Shah Shoojah in Afghanistan, by retaining a considerable British Force at Cabool, Candahar, and Kilat? At the former place a Brigade of the following strength is to remain for the present:—

4 Troops Bengal Horse Artillery.

No. 6 Light Field Battery.

2 Regiments of Bengal Cavalry.

Detachments of 1st Local Horse.

H.M. 13th Foot.

16th Regiment Bengal Infantry.

48th Regiment ditto ditto.

At Candahar.

4th Company, 2nd Battalion, Bengal Artillery.

43rd Regiment Bengal Infantry.

Surely this is not a very flattering reception of Shah Shoojah-ool-Moolk by a *faithful people, anxious* for his restoration to the throne of his fathers. Where are we to seek for the halcyon appearance that his return to those dominions, from which he was formerly ejected, was to have spread over an oppressed land? May we not be said instead, to have stumbled upon a hallucination?

With a perfect knowledge of the existing inimical feelings towards the Shah and his Highness's supporters, thus undisguisedly evinced, there can be but little doubt of what the result of the failure of our attack on Ghuznee would have

produced. It may, and doubtless will be said, that the inimical feelings here referred to do not exist. Why then do we retain the large force directed to remain in Afghanistan? Is it because Dost Mahumud is a vagrant wanderer at the head of three or four hundred followers? Surely this cannot be the cause. If there was anything in existence like the sentiments of loyalty and devotion, of which we have heard, whence the necessity to retain so large a force to protect a beloved and revered Sovereign, restored after a long exile, to the anxious wishes of a loyal people, against an expelled tyrant, a deserted outcast, wandering in quest of an asylum? No! the matter cannot be disguised. Our legitimate and well-founded apprehension of the power which Dost Mahumud possesses, to expel the Shah, if left dependant on the resources of his attached subjects, is the true cause of the necessary and prudent arrangement we have adopted. And that that necessity will soon cease, is not to be expected at present, nor until things have taken a definite course in Europe; until then the future agitation or tranquillity of Afghanistan must continue uncertain. For so long as the views of the Cabinets of St. Petersburg and St. James's remain opposed, so long will Dost Mahumud's party receive an encouragement from Russia that will materially interfere with the settlement of Afghanistan. The precarious circumstances in which that country is placed will demand our care and superintendence, until we have negotiated some permanent arrangement with Russia, which will necessarily involve large disbursements for the maintenance of a force, adequate to such contingencies, as are within the limits of prudent apprehension.

The sums expended in our military operations, for the purpose of restoring Shah Shoojah to the throne, and for maintaining him on it for the first year, with the expence of rendering Herat capable of defending itself against any future invasion on the part of Persia, will, it is presumed, amount to a sum which the Shah will never be able to repay. Here it will very probably be retorted, the affair is not one of pounds, shillings, and pence, but a large political question involving the present peace and future stability of our Eastern posses-

sions, with which the prosperity of England is inextricably mixed up. Granted; but surely, if the same security was obtainable for a less sum, the advantage resulting from the saving would merit the consideration of the Statesman, the Philosopher, and the Financier, for a prudent Government ought to calculate the means and probable cost, morally, politically, and financially, of a desired object, previously to undertaking its achievement.

In addition to the vast expence that has already been incurred, the imminent danger that has been run, the faith that has been sacrificed, and the aggression that has been committed, we have still before us an unknown course full of difficulties, to surmount which, if we continue in our present career, may involve further proceedings of a most questionable nature, pregnant with important results that may prove fatal or otherwise to our interest, according to the wisdom that directs our deliberations on this momentous subject. We have taken up a position from which we never can retreat, to maintain which will bring us into immediate collision with Persia, Russia, and the States North-north-east of Cabool, which we already see have taken the alarm; else why should Bokhara have committed herself by the imprisonment of Col. Stoddart? Will not Russia and Persia strain every nerve to excite their fears, by pointing out the gradual and unceasing progress of our arms, from the Bay of Bengal to the vicinity of the Caspian? Will not every engine and contrivance be set at work to make a common cause against what will be termed our grasping ambition? Will not the Afghans be considered a mere tool in our hands to be used as our lust for conquest may dictate? We may truly be said to have reached the frontiers of European politics, and must of necessity be prepared to participate in every event that may agitate the councils of the Western world.

All the foregoing evils, for evils experience it is feared will prove them to be, might have been avoided, and at least equal security have been obtained, by forming a connection with the powers we found in possession of Afghanistan, who were willing to receive us as friends and allies. The ob-

stacles to such an arrangement were insignificant; Dost Mahumud was ready to hold Peshawur from Runjeet Singh, nor would there have been much difficulty in bringing that Chief to accede to the terms it might have been found expedient to negotiate. A determined, hostile resistance to such plans would not in all likelihood have been offered. The immediate expense of the arrangements, consequent upon this course, would have proved trifling, and the political measures to have been effected could never have proved difficult. Sinde, Candahar, Cabool, and Herat should have been acknowledged as independent states, existing under our power, and subordinate to our will. An offensive and defensive treaty with each other, under our special guarantee, would have secured the resources of the whole, when necessity commanded combined operations. An agent at each state, with a moderate contingent, officered by us, would have maintained the internal peace of Afghanistan; and moderately reinforced from India, upon any danger seriously threatening Herat, we might have defied the united machinations of the Czar and Persia to have wrought us harm. As matters now stand, we have Persia, Russia, Bokhara, and Summercund upon the frontiers of a kingdom, the internal principalities of which abound with the elements of insurrection. Bokhara and Summercund may be made subservient to Russian views, on being persuaded that becoming so was the only means of insuring their independence against British aggrandizement. Will it be contended that Afghanistan, essentially democratic in its habits, can be brought by the exertion of the Shah to submit without many struggles to his arbitrary will? Shall we not be obliged for years to aid him and his successors with our arms, our treasure, and our advice?

From the public papers we learn, that Brigadier Sale, with the 35th and 37th Regiments of Native Infantry, enforced by a troop of Horse Artillery, and a Regiment of the Shah's, was about to proceed to Bamian for the purpose of expelling Dost Mahumud from Khoolam, and that in the event of not being able to pass the snow, a campaign in Toorkistan, in the summer, would be undertaken. Here we plainly see that

much remains to be accomplished,—that however successful our operations have been against Afghanistan, we have a great deal to perform before we can be considered as having permanently organized our western frontier. Considering what that frontier now is, the crores that have been squandered in obtaining it, and the vast sums that must annually be disbursed for some time to come to perfect it, so far as it is susceptible of perfectibility, we have little doubt but that the thinking part of society who were cognizant with the real state of Afghanistan before we adopted the resolution of invading it, to replace the Shah on his throne, will feel satisfied of the error committed in associating our interests with those of Shah Shoojah-ool-Moolk to the prejudice of Dost Mahumud,—an error that may be attended by a long course of petty hostilities with disobedient and independent Chiefs, and which will involve a vast expense, and serve to keep alive a feeling of enmity, at well as actual opposition, to the authority of that power which we have considered it expedient to invest with supremacy in the Doorannee Empire.

We have the best authority for stating that Herat, from what it lately suffered, is utterly defenceless and dependent upon us for its existence. We have accordingly advanced money for its repair, and sent officers capable of superintending the construction of the necessary works. We know that Kamran is incapable, uncertain in his temper, and cruel in his disposition; we know that his Minister is ambitious, and that he will adopt such measures as he may conceive calculated to ensure the success of his object—the aggrandizement of the state whose councils he sways. Here we have a field ripe for the intrigues of Persia and Russia,* who will doubtless feed the ambition of their dupe with the hope of placing Kamran upon the Throne of Cabool. All that has hitherto transpired, affords the most satisfactory evidence of Shah Shoojah's inability, from incapacity, want of means, and the character of the nation, to maintain himself independent of the British Power, in a country exposed to interminable in-

* It is credibly reported, that Col. — has been dispatched by the Russian Government from St. Petersburg to make his way into Afghanistan, and carry on the proceedings of his predecessor, Vickovitch.

ternal revolt and external invasion.* By adopting his cause, we have forced a democratical State, which, under our protection, might have proved a formidable barrier to the invaders of India, into a weak and contemptible monarchy, with all its parts jarring and incongruous, anxiously looking out for a favourable opportunity to dissolve the hateful bonds by which they are reluctantly bound. In such a condition, what beneficial results will it yield, that would not have more abundantly sprung from a federal form of Government, under its selected Chiefs, in the enjoyment of immunities, to protect which, if tolerably secured to them, the people would readily shed their blood. Whoever will maintain the first of these positions, must know little indeed of that which is the spring to action in semibarbarian, as well as in civilized society. It must not be supposed that the opposition, encountered by our army from the Afghans, is a criterion by which a correct judgment may be formed of the opposition the several states under our influence would offer to an army entering from the westward. Nothing can be more different than the condition, that Afghanistan would present, presuming its chiefs to be connected with us by Subsidiary Treaties, to an invading foe, than that which we experienced in our recent invasion. Allied with us and directed by our genius, they would, it is fair to suppose, show a vigor, equal to that displayed in defence of Herat under the influence of Mr. Pottinger, a defence that entitles the garrison and the young Hero, under whose auspices and stimulated by whose example they fought and suffered, to every praise that any fortress can lay claim, with whose achievements history has made us acquainted. Dislocated as we found them, each suspicious of the other, opposed interests, disunited, doubtful of their friends, and void of means, it was quite impossible that the Afghan people could do any thing contrary to what our army experienced. What have we to expect from Shah Shoojah when left to his own resources? With a revenue of thirty-five lakhs (350,000*l*), what force can he keep up, that will in any way

* Since writing the above, intelligence has been received of the failure of an attack upon Pushut, in which 19 men were killed, and 36 wounded, besides 2 European officers.

prove serviceable to us in the day of need, should that ever arrive, we may judge by what has already been developed. He has been placed upon the throne of his fathers, not surrounded by the people, but guarded by British bayonets. Where was the acclamation heard that hailed his return to the halls of his fathers? If a general feeling in his favour exists, whence the necessity of retaining the Bengal portion of the army, that accompanied him from India, with the exception of the 16th Lancers and the 3rd Cavalry—an arm that is useless in a mountain country? If the joy of the Afghan nation at the restoration of Shah Shoojah was such as it has been described in the public dispatches; whence the necessity of sending Brigadier Sale with a strong brigade into Toorkistan to dislodge Dost Mahumud, who has been described as a fugitive attended by three hundred followers? The Governor-General, in his manifesto of October, 1838, “confidently hopes that the Shah will be speedily replaced on his throne by his own subjects and adherents, and when he shall be secured in power, and the independence and integrity of Afghanistan established, the British army will be withdrawn.” How this confident hope has been realized,—the past and passing events clearly tell.

At present Afghanistan may be said to be in our possession, our troops being scattered over its surface, Quetta, Killa Putta, Candahar, Ghuznee, Kelat-i-Gilzee, Cabool and Bamian, Jellalabad and the Khyber pass; and so long as Dost Mahumud remains loose upon the country, so long, at all events, will the British Government be under the necessity of maintaining a considerable force to the westward of the Indus, and should the Russians throw forward a force upon its southern frontier to give confidence to Persia, and check the chiefs of Bokhara, Bulkh, and Summercund, such a demonstration may be considered sufficiently unequivocal to render it prudent upon our part, to be prepared for the next scene of the drama. Hence the necessity of an enormous outlay that can never be repaid, and the obligation of supporting an order of things diametrically opposed to the habits of the people, and certainly in no way calculated

to strengthen our power in a quarter which will require a constant and vigilant superintendence.

Since this letter has been commenced, matters in the Punjab have taken a decided turn,—a turn that it was natural to expect they would take,—one that may enable us in some degree to provide facilities for the passage of our troops across the Indus at any future period. The serious inconvenience experienced from not being able at all times to command a passage through the Punjab, will no doubt prompt us in negotiating such new arrangements with that power as the recent occurrences at Lahore may render advisable.

If we are in any degree a party to the succession of Kurruck Singh, we may be called upon to arbitrate between him and his ambitious son. But even if we should not be appealed to, we may, with a considerable degree of justice, interfere in behalf of the acknowledged heir of our old ally Runjeet Singh, or we may *find it convenient, if not necessary, to interfere to prevent hostilities tending to disturb the peace of the country eastward of the Indus*. The dissensions which have arisen in the Seikh Court were not difficult to be foreseen. The imbecility of Kurruck Singh, and the ambition of Shere Singh, his brother, and of Nao Nehaul Singh, his son, were eminently calculated to precipitate the event which has taken place, and thereby occasion an opening for our interference. Much future embarrassment may be prevented by our so regulating the affairs of the Punjab as to secure to the British Government a prominent influence in the Councils of Lahore. The evident approach of Runjeet Singh's death in June 1838, and the result that was sure to attend it, ought to have exercised immense influence over our Councils in determining the course to be taken in Afghanistan, and if it had happily done so, different arrangements to those in progress would probably have been made, and we thereby saved an expenditure that can never be remunerated, and led to form a more secure connection with Afghanistan than that into which we have entered, and from which it would now be difficult to recede. The measures which we have adopted have placed us in a prominent posi-

tion in the great theatre of Central Asia, with a mighty and unscrupulous power in our front. We must therefore at all times be in a state of preparation to counteract her intrigues or repel her aggressions, which will necessarily involve a vast increase of expense. Removed as the scene of our resources is from the theatre of our operations, all those contingencies were obvious, and ought to have been placed in the scales, when Shah Shoojah was weighed against Dost Mahumud. We must not be deceived by the Russians having disallowed the hostile proceedings of her agents. The employment of a Russian regiment, conveniently denominated deserters, against Herat, although their return to Russia had been officially required, is a sufficiently intelligible illustration of their designs. Is the Czar Nicholas a man to be duped or disobeyed by his servants? Has there ever been an abler or more absolute sovereign at the head of any despotic nation? And yet the British Government is satisfied with the statement made by Count Nesselrode! Russia having exhausted all the means that money, intrigue, and covert hostility placed at her disposal; and having, for the time, failed in her project, repudiates the acts of her agents. Are we justified in remaining satisfied until she resumes her intrigues and aggressions with double vigour? Had Persia, urged on and aided by Count Simonitch, succeeded in taking Herat, what atonement would Russia have offered to England for the injury perpetrated through her instrumentality? Warned by experience, we should adopt measures to secure ourselves, as well against the treachery of our friends as the hostility of our enemies. We have crossed the Rubicon, and must maintain a force in Afghanistan, otherwise it will fall into the grasp of the Autocrat. It seems expedient, before closing this letter, to take some notice of what the Quarterly Review says in No. CXXVII, of Russia, Persia, and England. It commences this article by stating that Persia, from the death of Nadir Shah to the accession of Augha Mahumud Khan, had exercised no control over the province of Khorassan, by which I presume it is meant to say that the non-exercise of authority by Persia over one of the Provinces forming the Empire during some

reigns nullifies her claim to sovereignty!! How far this doctrine may be in unison with the received opinions of nations, it is not necessary to examine. It will suffice for the present to know, that Persia never formally gave up her right of sovereignty, and that whenever her condition admitted of her exerting her means to bring Herat under her power, those means were put forth. Moreover, that her right to do so has been acknowledged by our envoys in Persia; vide the correspondence of Messrs. Ellis and McNeil with our Foreign Secretary. Their success or reverse does not in any way contravene the question of her rights, and certainly goes to establish the fact of doing all in her power to maintain them. The last attempts were made in 1833, but their failure in nowise weakens the pretensions of the Persian Monarch.

The Quarterly Review states, "that the Afghan people, however they might have been misled by intrigues, irritated by ill treatment and excited by ambition, or by personal animosity to aid in expelling Princes of the royal family, still regard with feelings of attachment or of reverence every member of that house." Such certainly has not happened to be the case, if we may judge by the force we find ourselves constrained to keep in that country, to maintain the Shah upon his Throne; "the moment it became necessary for us to interfere at all in Afghanistan, it was obvious that we could not do so advantageously, except in concert with Runjeet Singh." Here again I reluctantly dissent from the opinion of that able periodical, so far as to feel satisfied, that had we never acted in Afghanistan in concert with the Seikhs, we should have been better off than we now are.

In what have we been aided by the Seikhs? I would ask. Did we march through their country direct upon Cabool, and thereby save a third, at least, of the distance, and avoid all the difficulties that such a route would have prevented? Did our united arms triumph over Ghuznee, and was the Shah seated on the throne of his fathers amidst the acclaim of both armies? It may appear to those who are removed to a distance from the scene, and who are not intimately acquainted with our relations with Runjeet Singh, and the

extent of the aid derived from his co-operation, that we could not advantageously interfere in the affairs of Afghanistan without doing so in concert with the Ruler of the Punjab. It may further appear to them, that the position of that country rendered the assistance of its Sovereign so necessary to the successful termination of our interference, as to render the use of argument for illustrating the assumed fact a matter of supererogation.

That the hearty co-operation of the Ruler of the Punjab would have greatly facilitated the undertaking, there cannot exist a doubt, and that a free participation in its resources would materially have forwarded our operations in Afghanistan, none will be so hardy as to deny; but that the hearty co-operation of its Ruler, or the free access to its resources, were indispensable to the happy conclusion of our proceedings, cannot in the face of our experience be maintained. Have we not seen our army assembled at Ferozepore compelled to take the circuitous and all but impassable route of Shikarpore, the Bolan Pass, and Candahar, instead of the direct and obvious one, through the comparatively short and easy route of Lahore and Attock? Have we not seen our army, after having suffered the severest privations, and having overcome all but insurmountable obstacles, achieve the object of their march, without having received any aid direct or indirect from Runjeet Singh? With what degree of truth, then, can it be asserted, that the British Government could not attempt, without the concurrence of the Seikh Ruler, the establishment of its interference over the affairs of Afghanistan? In what have we been assisted by Runjeet Singh? If in aught, let it be shown: have we not rather been thwarted? Witness the conduct of the Seikhs who accompanied Captain Wade. How did they aid in the capture of Ali Musjud? How did the present puppet, Kurruck Singh, conduct himself when application was made for the return of our troops by Lahore? On this subject the Review further states, "But Runjeet Singh had already concluded a treaty with Shah Shoojah, for the avowed purpose of replacing that Sovereign on the throne."

Does it follow then, that because Runjeet Singh, in fur-

therance of his schemes of aggrandizement, had engaged to replace the repudiated Shah, that it was our obvious interest to take upon ourselves all the hazard and all the expense which we have incurred, that he might reap, as he has done, all the benefit of our subserviency to his schemes? In a former letter I have noticed, that Runjeet Singh obtained, under the mask of an interchange of presents, a considerable tribute from the Shah, and by a transfer, guaranteed by us, of the most productive part of the Dooranee Empire. Let the Review detail the advantage that has accrued to us. An enormous debt, that it is hardly possible the Shah can ever repay; and the obligation of defending the kingdom from all foreign invasion, is alone our portion of the prize: besides having placed ourselves in direct collision with Russia, giving that power the advantage of having right upon her side which she incontestably possesses. The Review continues, "When the present Rulers of Cabool and Candahar had entered into engagements with Persia and Russia, which placed them at the disposal of those powers, and made it necessary for the Government of India to break down, if possible, this combination against it, by a direct interference in Afghanistan, which could not have been attempted without the concurrence of the Seikh Ruler, there was absolutely no other course open to us, but to become parties to the Treaty by which he had already formally engaged to aid in re-establishing on the throne of Afghanistan the representative of the exiled family." With regard to the conduct of the Chiefs of Candahar and Cabool, which it is stated in the above citation compelled us to the course we adopted, it is well to bear in mind, that however precipitate the Candahar Chief was in throwing himself into the arms of Persia and Russia, his brother, of Cabool, did not follow his example till such time as the engagements entered into with Runjeet Singh induced the Government of India to give up the Cabool Chief. In proof of this, Captain Burnes's letter, dated the 13th of October, 1837, to the Address of Mr. Secretary Macnaghten, and his letter of the 13th of March, 1838, together with Dost Mahumud's of the 21st of March, 1838, to the Governor General, are appealed to. In these

documents it will be seen, that so far from Dost Mahumud having precipitately thrown himself into the arms of Persia, he was most anxious to ally himself with us; that he even offered to hold Peshawur from Runjeet Singh, to make that chief an apology for former conduct,—to pay him tribute and horses,—to dismiss Vickovitch, and never receive agents from other powers without our sanction, and even to surrender all claims upon Peshawur. It cannot therefore be said to have been the conduct of the Chief of Cabool that incurred the necessity of our breaking with the Afghans, but rather our desire to meet the views and wishes of Runjeet Singh, who, it has been seen, had pledged himself to support the exiled monarch in his attempt to regain his throne. With regard to the impossibility of our attempting a direct interference with the affairs of Afghanistan, without the concurrence of the Seikh Ruler, such a position is quite untenable. So far from its being the case, it would have been fortunate indeed had we broken off with him. Our direct interference might, as I have before observed, have brought on a war with Runjeet Singh. The result of such an event would have placed us upon the Indus,—would have secured to us the resources of the Punjab, and the shortest and most convenient route into the heart of Afghanistan, whenever our appearing in that country might be required. At present, operations in Afghanistan must be attended with every possible disadvantage. We have, for instance, a foreign state between our army, and the source whence it draws its supplies, consequently any defeat in front would be likely enough to create an enemy in our rear,—at least it might leave us dependent upon a very uncertain friend, an alternative against which prudence would provide.

With regard to the opposition that the Sikhs could have offered to our proceedings, I have formerly shown that their opposition would have rendered our position immeasurably better than it now is. Had we been so fortunate as to have disagreed with Runjeet Singh on the Afghanistan question, and had a rupture ensued, the Afghan frontiers would have, in all probability, been extended to the Indus; in which case the Sikhs must have fallen into a subsidiary state, de-

pendent upon our forbearance and friendship, and Afghanistan would have remained undisturbed, and allied to us by every tie that can bind nations. We should by such a course of events have saved immense present expenditure, and should have been close to the base of operations, if circumstances ever required our army to take the field to oppose that of Russia.

In conclusion, I have only to remark, that the public documents submitted to Parliament fully justify the conviction, that the whole course of our proceedings, with respect to Persia and Afghanistan, afford the former just grounds for complaint, and Russia, as her ally, grounds for interfering in the affairs of Afghanistan. Persia offered all it was in her power to offer; but nothing short of giving up her just rights would satisfy our Minister. It would have been a wise course had we governed our proceedings by the principles set forth by Count Nesselrode, which are laid down in very perspicuous language in his letter to the address of Lord Palmerston:—"Carefully to maintain the tranquillity of the intermediate countries which separate the possessions of Russia from those of Great Britain; to consolidate the tranquillity of those countries; not to excite them against each other, by nourishing their mutual animosities; to be content with competing in industry, but not to engage in a struggle for political influence: finally, beyond everything else, to respect the independence of the intermediate countries which separate us: such is, in our opinion, the system which the two Cabinets have a common interest invariably to pursue, in order to prevent the possibility of a conflict between the two great powers, which, that they may remain friends, require not to touch each other, and not to come into collision with each other in the centre of Asia." Presuming this to be an honest expression of the feelings and desires of the Russian Cabinet, it is impossible to imagine a policy more calculated to maintain the peace of Asia than that laid down in the above extract; and happy indeed would it have been for Central Asia, and for Europe, had we been actuated by the feelings which dictated the communication of sentiments that are highly creditable to Count Nesselrode's sagacity as a

statesman, and to his heart as a man. We have unfortunately adopted an opposite line; we have identified ourselves with a State over which Persia had undoubted prior claims, and the support of those claims, under Russian influence, will, in all probability, at some future day, precipitate events detrimental to the best interests of both nations, and ruinous to the countries in which the struggle for dominion takes place.

LETTER V.

December, 1840.

IN the July Number of the "Edinburgh Review," for the year 1840, there is an article on "The Present State and Prospects of British India," in which the author states, with reference to our Afghanistan policy, "The soundness of those views has been abundantly substantiated. The difficulties were solely those of toil and privation,—the reception of the Shah, at Candahar, was enthusiastic. The Barakzie chiefs fled before him without striking a blow. The whole population, high and low, came out to meet Shah Shoojah, bringing garlands of flowers, and strewing the road with roses." How far the soundness of our policy has been borne out by occurrences, and how far "enthusiasm" in Shah Shoojah's cause has been displayed, and how far the whole population, high and low, have strewed roses in his path, will be shewn in the sequel.

Previously to entering into the policy so lauded by the writer in the "Edinburgh Review," it may not be irrelevant to remark, that when a man sits down to write upon the present condition and future prospects of a country, he engages in a work intimately connected with past, present, and future history. Hence it necessarily becomes an imperative duty, to lay before his readers a full and impartial sketch of such parts of history as may bear upon the subject under consideration, that they may have the means of forming a true opinion as to the soundness and justice of the policy upon which the measures he recommends to their approbation are based. If a writer fails to do so, he is guilty of endeavouring to mislead the public, and of disseminating opinions that may or may not lead to consequences injurious to the interests of the State.

If the writer in the "Review," means to infer that the soundness of the motives that lead to the adoption of a great measure, involving every principle of justice, and the most important after-results, are to be tested by the success of a battle, or the consequences of a single campaign, we must protest against such doctrine, as being inconsistent with wisdom, at variance with all received opinions on the subject, contrary to the interests of civilized society, and tending to reduce the rights of nations to be disposed of by mere brute force. If the writer in the "Review" be correct, then indeed the desolation and rapine that followed the sanguinary triumph of Alaric, Attila, Zengis Khan, Tamerlane, Nadir Shah, and Napoleon, are justifiable by their success. The same standard, too, for measuring events, may be brought forward to sanctify the revolting atrocities committed in the hour of victory by the army of the Constable Bourbon, in the devoted metropolis of the Roman Empire.

In deviating from the policy that governed our proceedings in 1832 and 1833, when Shah Shoojah pressed the supreme government of India to aid him in the recovery of his long-lost sway over Afghanistan, we wandered from the obvious suggestions of justice, and unhappily strayed into the paths of expediency; and we now find ourselves involved in a most vexatious labyrinth, which must always be the case, when in great affairs, timidity, short-sightedness, and over-caution are allowed to assume the ascendancy, where enlarged, bold, and vigorous measures should have reigned. The result has proved what it did not require any keen foreknowledge to prophesy. We shall now take a glance at the former history of Afghanistan, and then proceed to examine the policy panegyricized by the "Review."

From Elphinstone and Foster, we learn that the Afghanistan nation is composed of sixteen different tribes or clans; and the king is obliged to pay great deference to their wishes. We are further informed, that Zumaun Shah was expelled by his younger brother, Shah Shoojah, who reigned from 1803 to 1809, when he was himself expelled by Mahumud Shah, and that the Cabool country was partitioned out between the sons of Futteh Khan. Hence we perceive that

Shah Shoojah was a mere usurper, and consequently devoid of any hereditary right to the throne.

In 1818, Shah Shoojah, who had been residing as a pensioner at Loodianah, left that place, and went towards Sind, and with the partial aid of some of its chiefs, attempted to re-establish himself in his usurped dominions. Failing, however, in his second aggression, he returned in 1821 to Loodianah, and was again placed upon the list of royal pensioners. In 1819, 1820, and 1821, Runjeet Singh wrested from the sons of Futteh Khan, the province of Peshawur, and the valley of Cashmere. In 1832, the exiled usurper attempted to induce Lord William Bentinck, the then Governor General of India, to aid him in a second attempt to acquire possession of Afghanistan; but the foresight and prudence of that unambitious nobleman would not permit him to hazard the interest of our possessions, by the adoption of so questionable a line of policy. From the foregoing brief statement of Afghanistan affairs, two important points are fully established. First, that Shah Shoojah is not the legitimate sovereign of the Doorahnee empire; and, secondly, that he is not popular with the people.

From Burnes, we learn that Dost Mahumud was both an able ruler, and popular; and recent events decidedly demonstrate, that Shah Shoojah is by no means popular, and that he retains possession of the throne exclusively by the aid he receives from the British Government. The occurrences to which we allude, are the various attempts throughout Afghanistan to oppose his sway, which have only been put down by the British bayonet. The recapture of Khelat,—the attempt on Quetta,—the siege of Khalum,—the defeat of Captain Macgregor's detachment,—the defeat before Pushoot of Colonel Orchard's force,—the desertion of Captain Sturt's corps to Dost Mahumud's son,—the general feeling of excitement prevalent throughout the country on the approach of Dost Mahumud at the head of 10,000 raggamuffins, abundantly testifies. Add to this, that we are now about to send into Afghanistan a force consisting of her Majesty's 44th Regiment, 5th Light Cavalry, 27th and 54th Regiments of Native Infantry, and a troop of Horse Artillery, and we shall have a tolerably

correct standard for measuring the popularity of Shah Shoojah-ool-Moolk. What the "Review" says regarding the retiring of the Dooranee chiefs upon the approach of Shah Shoojah, backed by the British army, without striking a blow, is susceptible of easy and satisfactory explanation.

We learn, from the best authority, that the Sirdars had arranged for a night attack upon our army, which was only prevented by suspicion of each other's sincerity, caused by the traitorous conduct of the celebrated chief, Hadjee Khan,* who, for the purpose of personal aggrandizement, rather than from devotion to the Shah, stealthily left his associates in the lurch; and when the hour of assembling arrived, it became known that the Hadjee had gone off for the purpose of joining the British force. Hence arose that distrust of each other's loyalty to the general cause, that ended in the defeat of the premeditated attack. Of the Hadjee's want of attachment to the Shah, we have a clear and decided proof exhibited in his conduct in the pursuit of Dost Mahumud by Captain Outram's† party. We are distinctly told by this officer, that but for the treachery of the Hadjee, who contrived, under false pretences, to retard the Captain's movements, he would have come up and seized the Shah's principal enemy.

The feeble resistance experienced by our troops at Ghuznee and Khelat was obviously owing to the gallantry of our troops, and the partial surprise which favoured our operations, rather than to any latent spark of devotion to Shah Shoojah.

Our policy can only be adjudged by our interests and duty. The first were evidently to obtain a secure and permanent footing in Afghanistan, with the least possible hazard and expense, and in the most expeditious manner. The second was manifestly to effect the above with every possible regard for the rights of those with whom the pursuit of our object might bring us into contact; and with a full and

* See this chief's history in the Bengal Hurcarrah, of the 8th May, 1840.

† Ibid.

deliberate consideration of what was likely to be the result of the course we might adopt.

It would seem, then, that by allying ourselves with the rulers, who had held uninterrupted possession of the country from 1810 till 1839, we should have secured the co-operation of the Afghan nation, and secured a firm and powerful ally in event of future disagreement with the government of Lahore, and have avoided the expenditure of an enormous sum that can never be reimbursed.

By allying ourselves with Shah Shoojah, we have been forced into a collision with the Afghan people, the consequences of which it will require years of undisturbed tranquillity to obliterate; and we have entailed upon ourselves the paramount necessity of maintaining a regular force in Afghanistan, at a considerable expense, until such time as our relations with Russia are placed upon a footing that will admit of our withdrawing our army without endangering our empire. And we have reduced ourselves to the necessity of either increasing our standing army, or exposing our possessions to the eastward of the Indus to a very considerable hazard.

At the time when we adopted the policy which is lauded in the "Edinburgh Review" beyond question, we find the Governor General expressing, in a minute, dated 12th of May, 1839, the belief that Herat would fall, and the consequent advance of the power of Persia to the Indus! Had Herat fallen (and it was saved, under Divine Providence, by the unconquerable spirit and heroic exertions of Lieutenant Pottinger, and the influence of Colonel Stoddart, whom we have allowed, to the eternal disgrace of the nation, to remain a degraded captive in Bokhara), the power of Persia would have been firmly established on the threshold of our empire, under the influence and dictation of Russian councils, and the whole population of Afghanistan would necessarily have been arrayed against us.

Another proof of the wisdom of the "Review" is to be found in the subsequent conduct of the Lahore Durbar. It has recently been ascertained, that the late Ruler of the Punjab has been exciting the Afghan nation to resist Shah

Shoojah, and that he has, through secret agents, supplied or endeavoured to supply Dost Mahumud with the sinews of war, to enable him to resist our power and recover his *legitimate rights*. Had his machinations proved successful (but they too have been frustrated by the interposition of Providence), we should have found ourselves engaged with the combined forces of Afghanistan, Lahore, and Nepaul. The notorious intrigues of the last power, and her late aggressions on our frontier, will not admit of a doubt but that she would have eagerly seized the opportunity for carrying her long-cherished hostile schemes against our power into effect.

The expense and hazard that have attended the policy adopted (and they are vast and imminent), would have been avoided by a contrary course. Allied with Dost Mahumud, the sovereign of Lahore would have been powerless. The fall of Herat would have been attended by comparatively minor consequences, and we should have had little to apprehend from Nepaul. Our military charges would have been subject to little if any increase, and we should have strongly secured our Indian possessions within their natural limits; whereas, situated as we are, we must maintain a strong force to the westward of the Indus, and be always ready promptly to repel any invasion of our territories by our doubtful friends in the Punjab and Nepaul.

It may be urged, that we had not any choice; that we were bound to adopt the course pursued. To this we reply—Lord William Bentinck steadily refused all co-operation with the Durbar of Lahore in its schemes to reinstate Shah Shoojah; that there did not exist any treaty by which the British Government was pledged to the ruinous course into which we have permitted ourselves to be drawn; that the active opposition of Runjeet Singh, had we allied ourselves with the Doorannee chiefs, would have involved his own ruin, and secured to us an uninterrupted communication from the Sutledge to Herat. We shall close our remarks for the present on the “Review’s” “Present State and Prospects of British India,” under the impression, that we have brought forward sufficient proof to induce the thinking part of the nation to pause before they accept the views of that publica-

tion, as a certificate for the justice and soundness of the policy of which it appears to be so strenuous an apologist. To follow the writer in the "Review" through the whole of his able and highly interesting paper, would require more leisure than we at present possess, but we hope at no very distant period to have the gratification of demonstrating to the British public, that the extreme of any course of policy leads to the injury of our national character, and that our timid temporising towards Ava in 1837, was calculated to prove as ruinous to our interest, as our wanton aggression towards the Dooranee Sirdars has actually proved in 1840.

We shall now, in a very succinct manner, endeavour to lay before our readers a clear and precise sketch of our actual condition, which will enable them to come to a tolerably accurate decision on the important question—What measures should be adopted to place our Indian possessions in a permanently secure position?

With reference to our relations in Afghanistan, Sinde, Nepaul, and Lahore, and the possibility of a second attempt by the Russians to establish a force at Khiva, or on the Oxus, it appears expedient that we should take into our serious consideration, the measures it may be deemed prudent to adopt with a view to the permanent settlement of the two former countries, and the acquirement of a position in the two latter that would enable us to meet and check any attempt that Russia, in conjunction with Persia and the Sovereign of Bokhara, may make to fix herself at either or both of the above places.

The first matter that presents itself to our consideration is the state of the Indian army; and it is manifest that, in its present condition, it is in no wise equal to the exigencies of the service it may be called upon to perform. No time, therefore, should be lost in rendering it commensurate to the demands of the State.

We are at present engaged in a petty warfare of rather a serious nature, in Afghanistan and Sinde; war with Nepaul is trembling in the balance, while our relations with the state of Lahore are such, that any contingency might engage us:

hostilities with the Seikhs. Add to which, our armament in China may require reinforcements from India.

The recent occurrences in Afghanistan and Sind,* are likely to rouse into action a spirit of resistance through the countries westward of the Indus, which, if not put down effectually, may give rise to a general determination to resist our attempt to maintain the Shah upon his throne.

The disasters just referred to, have been the result of the inadequacy of our force in Afghanistan and Sind, and the only means of repairing the past, and preventing for the future, events calculated to produce more serious misfortunes, is to strengthen our troops to the westward of the Indus, so as to establish in the minds of the turbulent and dissatisfied people of that country, the conviction that their attempts to oppose us, will not only prove vain, but lead to the destruction of those by whom they may be made. This will appear to be the more necessary, as it will hardly be contended that a repetition of such lamentable events will not only tend to weaken the confidence of our native army, but inspire, in a proportionate degree, the daring audacity of our enemies throughout the whole of Asia.

If our operations in China should unhappily be protracted, may not the influence of the cabinet of Peking operate to such a degree upon the councils of Catmandhoo, as to induce that distracted and ill-advised Durbar to rush heedlessly into a conflict with the British power; and would not such an event be calculated to excite the state of Burmah, which has for years evinced a disposition inimical to our interests, to avail itself of what may be supposed a favourable opportunity to carry its long-cherished desires into effect? Were the above events to take place, are we in such a position as to be able to send an adequate army into every quarter where a force may be required? If we are not, and if those events are not considered to be chimerical, does it not behove us to place it in a condition that would render their occurrence

* See the affairs of Dr. Lord, Captain Hay, Colonel Orchard, Captain Anderson, Lieutenant Clarke — The attack on Quetta—The retaking of ~~Quetta~~—The siege of Kehan, and the late sad failure of Major Clibborn.

abortive? We are conquerors in India, and we are looked upon in no other light by our allies and our enemies; and the fact of our being so, should be the regulating principle of our policy: a departure from it may prove fatal to our sway. It was this conviction that prompted the intuitive mind of the great founder of our Indian empire in that country, in writing to Mr. Pitt after his victory over the Soubah of Bengal, to express himself in the following incontrovertible manner, shortly after the battle of Plassy. "The reigning Soubah, whom the victory of Plassy invested with the sovereignty of those provinces, still, it is true, retains his attachment to us; and probably, while he has no other support, will continue to do so; but Mussulmans are so little influenced by gratitude, that should he ever think it is his interest to break with us, the obligations he owes us would prove no restraint."

What Lord Clive says of the Soubah of Bengal, is applicable to all our allies of every persuasion, and to all the people of Asia. Self-interest is the bond of their union with the British government: and from the moment they perceive, or think they perceive, that their interest would be better consulted by turning against us, from that moment they would swell the ranks of our enemies. This should never be lost sight of, and its truth should tutor us to look upon our superiority in the field as the tenure by which we hold our dominion. To strengthen this tenure is to secure our sway,—to neglect doing so, is to hazard it.

The next point to be considered is, our relations with the states mentioned in the preceding part of this paper.—So far as Afghanistan is concerned, we may be deemed pledged to the policy already adopted towards that country, unless the experience of the last two years goes to prove satisfactorily that the Shah cannot be maintained upon his throne by any other means than a British force being permanently stationed in Afghanistan; in which case, it might possibly with some become a question whether or not it was advisable to come to an explicit understanding with the Shah, and acquaint him, that although we bound ourselves to place him upon the throne, which we did, under the impression that his rein-

statement was ardently desired by the mass of the people, that our doing so could not be understood to incur the obligation of maintaining him on it in opposition to their declared will. That having performed our pledge, and having, by the experience of two years, ascertained the undoubted feelings of the Dooranee chiefs, and the inclination of his subjects, we felt ourselves called upon to submit for his acceptance two propositions.—First, that he should, with the aid of his contingent, take upon himself the government of the country,* or accept, through our mediation, an adequate provision for himself and family. The second of these propositions may be objected to, as being opposed to the tripartite treaty, entered into with the Shah and Runjeet Singh, and an abandonment of a sacred engagement, incompatible with the honour, dignity, and power of the British government; as evincing to the natives of Asia unstable and fluctuating views, calculated to undermine their confidence in our professions, and to bring the local government of India into disrepute in Europe; and as affording grounds for those with whom we might hereafter wish to connect ourselves, for doubting the sincerity of our views, and the stability of our alliance.—These are certainly very weighty considerations, meriting the most unbiassed and deliberate reflection.

But the disadvantages that may apparently be expected to spring from a continuance in our present position, ought not to be lost sight of, as they tend to involve for a considerable period a heavy expenditure, the consequence of a civil war in Afghanistan, and keeping the minds of the people in an excited state of preparation, fitting them to embrace such offers as may be made to them by the secret agents or partisans of the Russian government. In addition to these, we may mention the utter inability of the Shah to reimburse us for the charge that maintaining him on his throne will incur, in consequence of the unfavourable terms of the tripar-

* Adoption of this measure might be considered as tending to throw the Shah entirely into the arms of the Seikhs, and to frustrate the object that induced our interfering in the settlement of Afghanistan. This, however, might be avoided by our declaring that we would not admit interference by the court of Lahore.

tite treaty. Moreover, in event of our being reduced to the necessity of engaging in hostilities with the nations eastward of the Indus, we shall be exposed to invasion from Lahore, and to the serious drawback of probable rebellion throughout Sind and Afghanistan. In whatever way we may view the question, we find ourselves beset with difficulties. It is, therefore, incumbent upon us to go back to the original question, and enquire what was the object that induced our adoption of the Shah. Were our motives those of compassion for his destitute and degraded situation, the consequence of necessity, or a presumed political expediency? If purely the former, are we bound to adhere to him till such time as our adherence involves our own security? If the latter, it ceases to exist, as political expediency would now seem to call for the adoption of that course most intimately connected with our own stability, which it might be contended was interwoven with the cause of the Sirdars in Afghanistan.

In the event of future hostilities with the court of Lahore, all we could expect from the Shah would be a precarious neutrality. Allied with the Sirdars, we should have hearty and active co-operation, impelled by the most powerful principle, self-interest, and anxiety to revenge former wrongs, and recover lost provinces. They would be eagerly forward in any attack upon the Punjab, the army of which could not stand for a moment against the combined operations of the British power, and its north-western allies.

In the event of a forward movement upon the part of Russia, our alliance with the Shah will throw the power of the Dooranee nation into the scale of our adversaries, and the slightest reverse will prove a strong temptation to the Seikhs to join the invading army, for it cannot be doubted that the followers of Nanak * would cheerfully sacrifice both the Shah and the British power, in the hope of an extended dominion to the northward and southward, under the guarantee of a power whose puissance might be considered superior to that of the state from whose all-absorbing influence they would consider themselves happily released. Upon the other hand, an alliance with the Dooranee Sirdars

* The founder of the Seikh nation.

would ensure the integrity of our northern frontiers, and facilitate the subjugation of the Seikhs, when our policy or interest might demand the sacrifice.

The first of these propositions involves a permanent heavy expenditure, and considerable uncertainty to the British Government; the latter, comparative security, and little cost. If the former be adhered to, no time should be lost in placing our relations in Afghanistan on a permanent footing, and augmenting our army, so as to secure an overwhelming force, wherever military operations are required, it being obvious, that the employment of small and inefficient detachments and garrisons, is not only eminently dangerous, but the most expensive in the sequel.

The temper and disposition of the authorities in Herat, would seem to dictate a decided policy towards that petty, but important state; and here it may be a question, whether our interests, and the general security of Afghanistan, do not point to the expediency of annexing it to Cabool, whoever the ruler of the latter may be. No empire was ever preserved by half measures; and the security of our Asiatic possessions, seems to call for the adoption of great and vigorous measures. The next matter for consideration, is our connection with the Punjab. The geographical situation of this country, with reference to Afghanistan and India, cannot but be considered as very embarrassing to the British Government. The councils of the Lahore Durbar are just now swayed by a young, impetuous, and ambitious prince, at the head of a numerous and efficient army, prompt to take advantage of every contingency holding out a promise of aggrandizement. Should necessity require the presence of a British army in Afghanistan, and should circumstances render operations to the northward of Hindoo Koosh imperative, what guarantee do we hold from the Lahore Durbar, that the line, from Loodianah direct to Cabool, would be always open for our convoys? And what assurance have we, that any reverse to the westward of the Indus, would not be taken advantage of for the furtherance of its own views? If we hold no such guarantee, and if we have not any adequate assurance, that a free passage at all times, and under all cir-

cumstances, would be afforded to us, is it not indispensable that measures be adopted to secure a free passage from the base of our operations, to the countries in which our armies may be employed? If it be so, ought not the Lahore Durbar to be called upon to acquiesce with such arrangements, as the government of this country, in its wisdom, may see fit to suggest? And if they be rejected, will it not become our duty to take steps to enforce the concession of such terms as we can confidently rely upon, for the free and unmolested communication with our troops in Afghanistan? Perhaps ceding to us, for the time being, Peshawur, Attock, Deera, Ismael Khan, Deera Gazee Khan, and Methun, at the junction of the Chunab and Indus, which would secure the navigation of the latter, might be considered sufficient.

The foregoing considerations bring under deliberation our relations with Nepaul, which are understood to be of a very delicate and precarious nature, exposed in some measure to be influenced by the result of our expedition to China.

It has been, from motives of expediency, determined to permit our present relations with Nepaul to remain undisturbed. Should we, therefore, in the course of another year, find ourselves under the necessity of negotiating with the Lahore Durbar for a free passage through the Seikh territories to Cabool, may they not be seriously embarrassed by our not having a sufficient check upon the Catmandhoo Durbar, to prevent its seizing such opportunity as hostilities in the Punjab would afford, to renew its recent aggressions upon our frontier? And might not such a contingency prove most injurious to our interests? If the reasoning here adopted be correct, it may be assumed that the present time is a seasonable occasion for placing our relations with the Catmandhoo Durbar upon such a footing as would forward our ulterior arrangements with Lahore, and secure us against the chance of future interruption or embarrassment. If this be ceded, it will perhaps be granted, that the removal of the Ranee from all connection with the affairs of the state, and means taken for maintaining a subsidiary force at Catmandhoo, with a partial reduction of the Nepaulese army, and placing in our hands one or two commanding positions for a certain period,

would be the means best calculated to guard ourselves against the uncertain friendship of our mountain allies. It may be argued, that such a course of procedure would be calculated to alarm the Lahore Durbar, and tend to precipitate that which it is our obvious present policy to avoid. Here it must be recollected that the known disposition of the Catmandhoo Durbar towards the British government, and its notorious intrigues with almost every power eastward of the Indus, for the purpose of organizing combined operations against our power, are reasons amply sufficient to dictate the course suggested.

In the present distracted state of parties in Nepaul, and the prevailing dissatisfaction presumed to exist in the army, we may naturally expect that rapid success would attend our operations. Indeed it would seem reasonable to hope that we should have entered into and triumphed over Nepaul, almost before the Lahore Durbar, supposing it so disposed, could originate and complete measures calculated to thwart our operations. And any indication of such an intention would afford us legitimate grounds for calling upon the Seikhs to give us an adequate guarantee against a repetition of such conduct.

LETTER VI.

March, 1841.

WHATEVER the affair of Burwan Durra may be designated by the future historian,—whether it be handed down to posterity as a triumphant termination of a course conspicuous for the wisdom of its conception and the boldness of its execution, or be recorded as illustrative of the good fortune of our councils and our arms in the extension of our influence in the East, it is not our intention to discuss. It is sufficient, that with it our campaign in Afghanistan may, possibly by some, be considered as having come to a conclusion; and that the time has arrived that enables us to take a view of what our success in that quarter has cost the nation, and compare it with what it would probably have cost, had our policy been different.

The object we have in entering into this enquiry has for its end nothing beyond the desire to bring the impartial part of the public to a full consideration of the hazard that has been incurred, with a view that its decision as to the justice, policy, and expediency of our measures, may be recorded for the benefit and guidance of those who may hereafter be charged with the controlling authority in our Asiatic possessions, as the honour and character of the nation cannot but be affected by the proceedings of its colonial governments.

Previously to going into the loss and gain likely to accrue upon the adoption of one measure or of another, it may be satisfactory to ascertain whether the Indian Government had the option of selecting the means which it should apply to check or control the conduct of Russia in furtherance of her Asiatic policy. Of the necessity of effectually opposing her schemes for the improvement of her mercantile relations with the nations and tribes of Central Asia, there cannot possibly

be any difference of opinion ; it being distinctly perceptible that her schemes for improving her commerce were obviously measures for extending and consolidating upon a sure and firm basis her political influence, to be exerted as occasion might afford a favourable opportunity for extending her dominions to the southward, and placing herself in such a position as would enable her to constrain the Cabinet of St. James's to acquiescence with her ultimate views of aggrandizement in Europe. Having once possessed herself of the power of materially aiding in endangering the existence of our empire in India, she would claim, in a tone that would not admit of denial, our concurrence or neutrality with her future views regarding the fate of the Ottoman Empire, and the possessions of the metropolis of Constantine.

Hence we were called upon to adopt every legitimate means to protect our interests against the machination of Russia, and to curtail her power. And hence originated the necessity of our forming an intimate connexion with the rulers of Afghanistan.

If we cannot shew right, policy, or necessity, to warrant the course pursued in favour of Shah Shoojah, it is greatly to be feared that some future historian, in continuing the philosophical history of our Indian empire, may record the proceedings of our Government as an uncalled-for and atrocious aggression on the rights of others. "Power without right" (said the great Lord Chatham) "is the most odious and detestable object that can be offered to the human imagination ; it is not only pernicious to those who are subject to it, but tends to its own destruction." Whether we have been guilty of exercising this odious and detestable power, contrary to the law of nations, will be seen in the sequel.

In determining whether we should expel Dost Mahumud from Cabool, for the purpose of reseating upon the throne a sovereign who had been exiled for thirty years, or ally ourselves with him, and thereby incur the hazard of making the chief of Lahore our enemy, it was incumbent upon us to examine the past and present situation of the parties concerned.

Runjeet Singh and Dost Mahumud both became rulers

under the influence of accidental circumstances. With a view, therefore, to secure the justice of our decision as to the rights of these rival chiefs, it may be proper to compare, weigh, and maturely consider the events that led to the independent sway of each of the above individuals. To avoid all possible chance of adopting an erroneous opinion upon a subject that affects the justice and honour of our government, it is necessary that our minds be aided by the recorded reports of our political officers, upon whose information it is presumed the government would decide. We shall, therefore, lay before our readers a concise abstract of the substance of the communications furnished to the supreme government by Captains Murray and Burnes, the former our agent with the Seikh States for fifteen years, the latter at the head of a mission sent into Afghanistan; and as nothing can be more satisfactory than the information furnished by them, the result of a fair comparison of the pretensions of the contending parties, as set forth in these valuable and interesting reports, must be considered as a correct datum upon which our judgment should be founded. We therefore beg to solicit the reader's attention to the following details from Captain Murray's report, and that of Captain Burnes and of the gentlemen employed under him.

Captain Burnes, in writing to Mr. Macnaghten, Oct. 14, 1837, says: "Dost Mahumud, with a view to procure protection against the Seikhs, and at the instigation of his Persian subjects settled in Cabool, under the name of Kazzelbash, made overtures to the Persian monarch, which were readily taken into consideration; and that an Elchee, or ambassador, had arrived at Candahar, in progress to Cabool, when he was in that city, with letters and dresses of honour for the Ameer." Captain Burnes, in communicating this intelligence says: "He (the Elchee) has appeared at a time most unfavourable to his master, when the attention of the British Government is directed towards Afghanistan, and which goes far to discredit him with all parties. It is doubtful if he will advance to Cabool; and it is certain if he does so, that any offer which he may make will never be placed in the balance against those of the British Government." Captain Burnes then

states the reasons that induce the chiefs of Afghanistan to seek an alliance with the British Government; and on the 26th November reports the Sudozye dynasty to have passed away, and the chiefs of the Barukzye to have assumed the rule of their native land, and speculates upon the extension of the circle of their power. Captain Burnes estimates Dost Mahumud's revenue at twenty-four lackhs per annum, and his ordinary force to consist of about 2500 infantry, and 12000 horse, and a park of 45 guns. We further learn from this report, that the chief of Candahar generally acknowledges his brother of Cabool as the head of the family, and follows his advice; and that their seeking an alliance with Persia, originates exclusively in the apprehension that their not doing so would be attended with ruin. We find too from this document, that the chief of Cabool and his brothers were conscious that an alliance with Persia was likely to end in their own subjugation; and that Dost Mahumud's fears for his ultimate independence were awakened by the style and tone of superiority assumed by the Shah of Persia in his communications; and that those fears led him to give the preference to the British Government, whose demonstration of sympathy with him, decided him in seeking an alliance with a nearer and more potent power, in preference to a distant and more dubious one.

Of Dost Mahumud's competence to preside over the destinies of the Afghan nation, Captain Burnes says: "To the vigilance which he has exercised over every branch of the administration his success is attributable. His sole aim is money; and he seeks for it from a full knowledge of what it can purchase; he expends his entire income, though his own household is maintained on the economical scale of 5000 rupees per month. His comprehension is quick, and his knowledge of character very great; he cannot be long deceived; he listens to every individual who complains, and with a forbearance and temper which is more highly praised than his justice and equity. In matters of a trifling nature he still adheres to the law, but in greater things his necessities have tarnished his decisions, though (as these affect the wealthier and least numerous portion of his subjects) without

giving general dissatisfaction. Nothing marks the man's superiority to his countrymen more than the ability to manage as he does, with power and resources so crippled. His caution is extreme, and his suspicion so easily excited as to amount almost to an infirmity, though self-reflection brings back with itself confidence. A peace with his neighbours would certainly render the power of this man durable, and enable him to reduce his army and expenses; but, as his fame has outstripped his power, he might covet the dominion of his western neighbours, and if he were, as before he came in in contact with the Seikhs, less exacting, which his good sense would dictate to him, he might consolidate his power and fix himself as the first of a new dynasty in Cabool. His brother, the celebrated Futteh Khan, long since pronounced him to be the hope of his family; and his subsequent career has justified his expectations.

Speaking of the trade of Cabool, Captain Burnes says: "Some grievances have, however, been got rid of, by the custom-house being no longer farmed and managed directly under the chief. Cabool can no longer boast of taking only one in forty like Bockhara, but, as compared with Persia, Herat and Candahar, and the Punjab (Runjeet Singh's territory), Cabool is a theme with the trading community. A Jew from Bawulpoor, whose authority ought to be good, declared to me, that the treatment of merchants in Cabool was as under the kings of Israel; that the Afghans were free from prejudices, behaved well, did not over-tax them, and that the duties which the Ameer had lately demanded of them were such as any ruler would take under difficulties."

With regard to the government, Captain Burnes remarks: "The republican genius which marks it is unchanged, and whatever power a Sudozye or Barukzye may acquire, its preservation can only be ensured by not infringing the rights of the tribes and the laws by which they are allowed to govern themselves. The Ameer has not erred in this point. —Nothing but his limited revenue prevents his being a mos popular ruler."

Of the tribe to which Dost Mahumud belongs, Capt. Burnes observes, "The family of Barukzyes, though inferior in rank

to that of the last which occupied the throne, is yet one of the most distinguished of the Dooranee tribes, belonging to the Zerub branch, from which the Sudozyes also are descended."

From the foregoing we learn several important facts:—

Firstly, that Dost Mahumud desired to ally himself with the British Government in preference to that of Persia.

Secondly, that his administration was popular, moderate, and efficient.

Thirdly, that his army was by no means despicable for a native army.

Fourthly, that his tribe was one of the most distinguished of the Afghan nation.

From Captain Leech's reports, we learn, that Ahmed Shah found himself at the head of the Afghan nation in 1747, in consequence of the assassination of Nadir Shah, and retained his position chiefly from having possessed himself of the Persian treasure on the fall of his predecessor. That had he not possessed the treasure he would have found himself in a perplexing predicament, as his brother chieftain, Hadjee Jemal, the grand-father of Dost Mahumud, and his brothers, whose tribe had always been one of the most numerous and powerful of the Doorannees, had kept up a separate state; but this chief, being in his dotage, was persuaded by his competitor, Ahmed Shah, to proceed on a pilgrimage to Mecca, whereby he was enabled without opposition to pursue his own schemes and consolidate his power. Ahmed Shah dying in 1773, was succeeded by his son Timour, who met with some little opposition from his brother Abdul Khalak, at Ghaznee.

On the death of Timour, in 1793, a faction headed by his favourite queen, placed his son Shah Zeman upon the throne of Cabool; Candahar being seized by his elder brother Humion, Peshawar by Abbass, Herat by Hadjee Jairozad-deen and Mahmood.

Shah Zeman having expelled his eldest brother from Candahar, and Abbass from Peshawar, depriving the former of his eyes, was induced by his minister to apprehend a combination among the nobles to depose him, which led to his

putting several of the most influential of them to death, among whom was Pendha Khan, the son of Hadjee Jemal (Ahmed Shah's competitor,) and father of Dost Mahumud and his numerous brothers. Pendha Khan, it should be remarked, received the title of Sarafraz Khan, from Timour Shah, for distinguished conduct at the battle of Moultan. Upon this occasion, his widow, with her eldest son, Futteh Khan, retired into Persia, and there joined Prince Mahmood, who shortly afterwards collected a force, and took Herat and Candahar, and proceeding to Cabool, met his brother Shah Zeman, at Mukud, where an action was fought, in which Shah Zeman was defeated, and some time afterwards, being made a prisoner, was deprived of his eyes; and his minister, who had been the cause of Pendha Khan's death, was paraded on an ass through the streets of Cabool, and then beheaded.

Shah Shoojah, the full brother of Zeman Khan, who had been left in charge of the government of Cabool, assembled an army and gave Mahmood battle at Ishpan, where he was defeated. After this action, Mahmood sent his son Kamran, with Futteh Khan, Dost Mahumud's eldest brother, to assume the government of Herat, while he remained at Cabool; where, giving umbrage to the sect of Soonies, he was, at the instigation of their chief priest, Meer Waiz, seized and placed in confinement, and his brother, Shah Shoojah, placed upon the throne of Cabool; which circumstance induced Kamran and Futteh Khan to leave Herat, and take refuge in Maroof. The latter, however, was subsequently persuaded to join Shah Shoojah, who imprisoned him. He was some time afterwards released by the interest of Meer Waiz, who was murdered at the instigation of Shah Shoojah. Soon after which we find Mahmood, Kamran, and Futteh Khan, at the head of a force on the plains of Namla, where they encountered and defeated Shah Shoojah, who fled through Attock to the Punjab, and took refuge with Runjeet Sing,* but ultimately sought and found protection from the British, at Loodianah, after a reign of seven years.

* Who ill-treated him, and deprived him of his famous diamond, the Kho-i-hoor.

Mahmood being again seated on his throne, made arrangements for the governments of Peshawur, Candahar, and Cabool, appointing his relations to the chief authority, and giving them for their colleagues the brothers of his talented and distinguished vizier, Futteh Khan, and finally retired to Herat. After this we find that Kamran, the son of Mahmood, influenced by jealousy of Futteh Khan, who had twice raised his father to the throne, seized that celebrated chief, imprisoned him, deprived him of his eyes, and subsequently of his life. We now find Dost Mahumud in arms, opposed to the ungrateful murderer of his illustrious brother, Futteh Khan. His first achievement was defeating Kamran in battle, in the vicinity of Cabool, whom he compelled to retire to Herat. We next find Prince Ayoob, a brother of Mahumud, placed on the throne of Peshawur, by Mahumud Azeem Khan, one of the numerous brothers of the late murdered vizier, Futteh Khan, about the same time that Dost Mahummud proclaimed in Cabool, Sooltan Ally, a brother of Mahmood, his successor. Shortly after this, Prince Ismael, Ayoob's son, at the instigation of Azeem Khan, murdered his uncle, Sooltan Ally, in open court at Cabool. Subsequently to this closing scene of rivalry and murder, we find Afghanistan parcelled out between the brothers of Vizier Futteh Khan, amongst whom Dost Mahumud assumes the first place, after the death of Mahumud Azeem Khan, and we finally find him firmly established in Cabool. The foregoing substance of Captain Leech's report, cannot, by any warped construction, be considered as giving Shah Shoojah a title of pretension to inherit the throne of Afghanistan, to the prejudice of Kamran, who was actually in possession of Herat.

From Burnes' reports, 8th September, 1837, we learn that the Seikh tributary states to the westward of the Indus require the presence of an army to compel them to pay tribute: and from Leech's reports, 1st October, 1837, we learn that the Mahummudan tribes in the vicinity of the Khyber Pass, entertain the most implacable hatred towards the Seikhs, in consequence of the intolerant character of their rule.

From Vigne's "Travels in Afghanistan and the Punjab "

we learn that Dost Mahumud was renowned for his justice—so much so, that when any thing even seemingly arbitrary occurred, it was not unusual to exclaim: "What! is Dost Mahumud dead, that there is no justice?" We are told, too, by the same author, that the Ameer was nervously anxious for an alliance with the British power.*

The foregoing is sufficiently demonstrative of the desire entertained by Dost Mahumud to act in concert with the British Government, and also of his ability, supported by our countenance, to acquire and maintain a controlling authority over the other chiefs, and ultimately to consolidate and transmit to his heirs the possessions he had acquired.

It further satisfactorily proves that he could have possessed himself of Candahar, and annexed it to Cabool, should his brothers, which was not likely to happen, persist in seeking a connexion with Persia.

We also learn that Shah Shoojah had been expelled by his brother and nephew, Mahmood and Kamran, who had in their turn been driven from Cabool and Candahar by the unfortunate and ungratefully used Futteh Khan; and that these chiefs repelled an attempt made by Shah Shoojah, in 1824, to re-establish his authority in these districts. The same source supplies the information, that Mahmood and his son Kamran possessed themselves of Herat, in which the latter has maintained his sway; and that Shah Shoojah, who attempted by force to establish his authority over Afghanistan, had been twice driven back, and compelled to seek refuge in the British territories. The most subtle and fertile genius, therefore, cannot by any sophistry, for a moment maintain his claim to be considered the legitimate sovereign of the dominion acquired by Ahmed Shah.

* See pages 386, 399, and 401; and that the tributary Hill Rajahs paid little attention to Runjeet's orders, see page 403. For the difference between the government of Shah Shoojah and Dost Mahumud, see page 372. Rajah Dhyen Singh and his family have possessed themselves of twenty-five rajahships in the hills.—See Vigne, p. 253.

Mr. V. refers to a treaty made by Lord Wm. Bentinck in October, 1831, that bound us not to interfere with Runjeet Singh's measures westward of the Sutlig.

Of Runjeet Singh and his government, Mr. Prinsep, in his life of this chief, quoting from Captain Murray's report, says: "With respect to the policy and internal government of Runjeet Singh, the most remarkable feature is, the entire absence of any thing like system or principle in his management. His career throughout has been that of an encroaching usurper; but what he has so possessed himself of, he subjects to no systematic administration. The whole is committed to farmers, to deal with the lives and property of the producing classes of the population: Runjeet Singh trusting to his own military means for the control of these farmers, and for the exaction from them of any extra gains he may learn they have acquired. Nevertheless, his extortions are directed chiefly against the old Sikh families and his own state officers; merchants and traders are protected, and the duties and taxes to which they are subjected, are not for the most part immoderate. Runjeet Singh has, however, shown a disposition himself to become a dealer in some articles; in shawls, salt, &c. &c.; and all that he touches becomes, of course, monopoly; or in some other shape, the source of exaction and corrupt gain."

"It cannot be said that Runjeet Singh has given to the Punjab any constitution or fixed form of government. There is no law, written or oral, and no courts of justice have been anywhere established. The Gooroo Mata, or old council of the Sikhs, has, with every other institution, adapted to the state of things which existed before the establishment of the present ruler, been entirely discontinued."

"At present the government appears to be a pure despotism. The standing army, ever ready for active service, and eager to be employed where plunder and exaction are the objects, forms the whole machinery of administration. By it only the treasury is filled and control exercised over state officers, powerful subjects, and indeed, over every class of the population. The present influence and verbal orders of the head of the state form again the exclusive hold upon the discipline and affections of the troops. The whole power and authority centres in the single individual whose fortune and his own abilities have placed at the head of affairs; and upon his being

removed from the scene, unless there be another to fill his place, with equal energy and command over the affections of his dependents, which, it is to be feared, is not the character of Khurrak Singh, every thing must necessarily fall into confusion."

Runjeet Singh had ever led a most dissolute life; his debaucheries, particularly during the Hooly and Dusseerah,* were shameless, and the scenes exhibited on such occasions openly before the court, and even in the streets of Lahore, were the conversation of Hindostan, and rival the worst that is reported in history of the profligacies of ancient Rome. The chief himself would parade the streets in a state of inebriety, on the same elephant with his courtezans, amongst whom one named Mora acquired most celebrity by her shamelessness."

This woman, Mr. Prinsep observes, was discarded for a Brahmin youth, which circumstance is thus noticed: "If the conduct of the ruler of Lahore should excite surmises as to the motives of the extraordinary attachment shewn to a graceful youth of the appearance of Koorshal Singh, the reader must yet make allowance for the habits in which the chief was brought up, and the examples by which he was surrounded.

"The Seikhs are notoriously addicted to Pederasty and other unnatural lusts, and the worst that is said of Roman and Grecian indulgence in such propensities, would find a parallel at the Durbars of the chiefs of this nation on either side of the Sutlig. He has great power of dissimulation, and under the greatest frankness of manners, and even familiarity in his intercourse, can veil subtle designs and even treachery. Address and cunning, nay, even corruption, have always been preferred by him as his instruments of success to any dash of enterprise calculated to excite admiration or inspire awe. His uniform conduct and career through life prove him to be selfish, sensual and licentious in the extreme, disregarding of all ties of affection, blood or friendship, in the pursuit of ambition or pleasure, and profi-

* Spring and Autumnal festivals, celebrated with Saturnalian rites.

gately greedy, plundering and reducing to misery, without the slightest feeling or remorse, widows, orphans, and families possessing claims to consideration and respect. In his youth he was lavish in his gifts to favourites, and there was liberality in his general dealings; but as age came over him, avarice and a desire for hoarding have been the ruling passions, and he is approached, even by his confidential officers and those in power, more with apprehension of robbery and exaction from themselves than of hope to add to their accumulated means through his indulgence."

Having laid before our readers the personal character of Runjeet Singh, the character of his government, the amount of his revenue and disposable force, together with a very condensed abstract of the reign of the Sudozye family, and the character of Dost Mahumud and his rule, we shall now proceed to make a few observations to show that the proceedings of the Indian government, with regard to the Punjab and Afghanistan, were not the result of right, policy, expediency, or necessity. We have seen from Mr. Prinsep's History of the Punjab, that its late ruler raised himself to power and dominion, by a continued course of lawless aggression upon his neighbours, and that he maintained his domination by the sword, and governed his subjects as his caprice dictated. Hence we are justified in coming to the conclusion, that the families he dispossessed of their hereditary possessions, would, had opportunity offered, have been forward to avail themselves of it, to regain their paternal estates; and we are likewise informed by this interesting and instructive little history, that neither the power or character of Runjeet Singh, was such as ought to have influenced the government of India to sacrifice any thing to conciliate his friendship, or our Governors-General to seek his personal acquaintance.

From Lieutenant Leech's reports, we learn that Shah Shoojah had no hereditary claims to the throne of Afghanistan to the prejudice of Prince Kamran; that he usurped the throne, and was expelled by his brother Mahmood, who had a prior claim, strengthened by former possession;

and further, that the feeling created in his favour, sprung from, and was supported by the report that the British Government advocated his cause. We also learn that the ancestors of the Barukzye family competed with those of the Sudozye for supremacy from the time of Nadir Shah's assassination; and that Mahmood, the last of the Sudozyes who can be considered to have exercised any uncontrolled power, was dethroned on account of his crimes: that the conduct of the heads of the Barukzye family had been marked by loyalty and devotion until their feelings and affections had been wantonly and ungratefully outraged by acts that constrained them to assume power as the only means left, to secure their preservation.

From Burnes we learn that Dost Mahumud was most anxious for an alliance with the Government of India; and that he was eminently qualified to rule the Afghan nation; that he was able, moderate, just, liberal, and patient, and was held in respect by the people, who were inclined to submit with cheerfulness to his sway. All of which is most fully testified by Mr. Vigne; and both these gentlemen acquaint us, as well as Lieutenant Leech, that the States west of the Indus, and those in the hills, were by no means subjugated by the ruler of Lahore. From all of which we are compelled to admit that the Government of India, when it found itself constrained to pursue active measures west of the Indus, to circumvent the intrigues of Russia, were at full liberty to choose the course best calculated in its sight to thwart the machinations of our rival, and arrange for the permanent ascendancy of the British interests in Afghanistan.

Had the reports of Captains Murray and Barnes, and Lieutenant Leech, not been in existence, and had our Government been ignorant of the actual condition of things in the Punjab, we should not have any ground for holding it responsible for the adoption of measures unjustifiable in themselves, as being wantonly aggressive and subversive of the rights of others, which had been acknowledged by our systematic refusal to aid Shah Shoojah in 1811; and in 1834, by a gross violation of our professed policy of non-

interference, eminently dangerous to the best interests of the State, by exposing it to the hazard of encountering Persia, supported by the whole of the Afghan population; adding largely to our debt, and wantonly lavishing the lives of our soldiers; and consolidating an increased power in the Punjab, that might, under any change of circumstances, be wielded to our injury.

With the Punjab in the condition here described, it is manifest, that we had not anything to apprehend from the opposition of Runjeet Singh, and that any attempt he might be induced to make to deter us from adopting the course which wisdom dictated, would have been feeble, and ultimately tend to establish our sway over the whole of the country between the Sutledge and the Indus.

Our views regarding the policy which has guided the proceedings of Government in its connexion with Afghanistan, have been subjected to the test of experience; and the result being unknown to the public, with the exception of the success of our arms, it may be useful to refer again to the subject, for the purpose of verifying the correctness of those views, and making known the hazard and loss by which our triumphs have been obtained. As the following opinion of one of the most sagacious statesmen of modern times, seems to bear upon the policy that actuated the government of India in the pursuit of its object westward of the Indus, I give it insertion in this place.

Lord Wellesley, in writing to Lord Clive, in 1803, on the subject of his intention to aid the Peishwa Badjerao in recovering his kingdom, from which he had been recently expelled by one of the notoriously lawless feudatory chiefs of the empire, says:—"Justice and wisdom would forbid any attempt to impose upon the Mahrattas a ruler, whose authority was adverse to every class of his subjects. The spirit of our recent engagements with the Peishwa involved no obligation of such an extent. Whatever might be the success of our arms, the ultimate object of those arrangements could not be obtained by a policy so violent and extreme. If, therefore, it should appear that a decided opposition to the restora-

tion of the Peishwa is to be expected from the majority of the Mahratta Jageerdars, and from the body of the Peishwa's subjects, I would instantly relinquish every attempt to restore the Peishwa to the Musnud of Poonah. The co-operation of the majority of the Mahratta Jageerdars for the restoration of the Peishwa to the due exercise of his authority, being considered to form an indispensable part of the arrangement for the accomplishment of that object, it is necessary that your Lordship should be apprised of my sentiments with regard to the conduct to be observed in encouraging these Jageerdars to co-operate with the British troops."

Here we see the British Government, under the guidance of one of the most able and enlightened noblemen of his time, hesitating whether it should employ its arms in the restoration of an ally, but just constrained to abandon his dominions by a rebellious feudatory chief, and resolved to relinquish an object that was, of all others, most required to secure its own important interests, unless it could obtain the sanction of the majority of the chiefs of the empire. If these just and wise sentiments met with the approbation of the Ministers of the Crown in those days, and if they were approved by the then Court of Directors, upon what principle can the present authorities in Europe sanction by their approbation, our recent proceedings in Afghanistan?

It may be objected, that we were compelled either to adopt the cause of Shah Shoojah, or view with supine and incomprehensible fatuity, the settlement upon the borders of our empire of the adverse influence of an avowed rival. Such an argument, if brought forward, would, it is apprehended, be considered fallacious, as it would be difficult to prove to the conviction of those who had even a moderate knowledge of the question under consideration, that we were reduced to the necessity of adopting the cause of the exiled monarch.

The chiefs of Afghanistan, as is most amply proved by Captain Burnes, were anxious to associate their interests with ours; which being the case, we are bound to show something to establish our right, the policy, or necessity of our adopting the opposite course. If we cannot do so, we

have fallen into a most lamentable error; an error, the consequence of which has led to the violation of the acquired rights of independent chieftains, the sacrifice of the lives of those who defended their unalienable rights, and a most unjustifiable appropriation of the power committed to us.

APPENDIX.

AFGHANISTAN.

(From the MORNING HERALD.)

WE take blame to ourselves, (but must plead, at the same time, the pressure of so many matters, recently, of absorbing public interest,) for not having seized an earlier occasion to direct the public attention to some "Letters on recent Transactions in India." These are a most valuable contribution to the history of that extraordinary political delusion which has induced us to cross the "forbidden" Indus; to invade the impracticable territory of an independent state, swarming with hardy and fanatical tribes, united against us by almost every motive that can light up national animosity with the fires of religious bigotry; and to persist,—against the determined hatred of a whole people, the despair of defeated enemies and the incessant attacks of predatory mountaineers greedy of plunder or thirsting for revenge,—in the attempt to re-establish on a throne, which his utter worthlessness has once before compelled him to relinquish, a sensual, imbecile, and unprincipled tyrant. To accomplish this guilty purpose—(for we shall call by no other name the re-imposition of Shah Shoojah on the throne of the Doorannee empire,)—we have waged an implacable war against his rival, a prince with more pretensions to our respect and favour, (after making all deductions for his political and even his personal offences,) than often fall to the share of Asiatic Sovereigns. But beyond the merits which he had to plead,—and of which the lamented Sir Alexander Burnes, Mr. Prinsep, Capt. Murray, Mr. Vigne, Lieut. Leech, &c. have been at once the unimpeachable witnesses and the eloquent eulogists, Dost Mahumud, whom we have dethroned and hold in unworthy captivity, was the chief whom, it was not more our interest to—than it was his own desire that we should—retain in those relations of amity

and alliance which would have effectually neutralised the designs of Russia in relation to establishing a paramount influence in Cabool. We should thus, too, have prevented that appeal to the assistance of Persia which he fairly forewarned us would be the inevitable consequence of repudiating him and siding with the puppet of the intrigues of the late chieftain of the Punjab. But we must not anticipate our author. The pamphlets before us, three in number, comprise a series, thus divided: 1. *Letters, &c.* (Calcutta, 1840.) *Letters* I. to IV.—Ditto (London, 1842.) *Letter* V.—Ditto (London, 1842.) *Letter* VI. Always bearing in mind that the earlier letters were written while Runjeet Singh was yet alive, and, therefore, the ulterior policy, consequent on the tripartite treaty of 1837 between the Governor General, Shah Shoojah, and Runjeet Singh, was still undeveloped,—the sagacity displayed by the writer in anticipating the great results of the disastrous combinations against which he strenuously protests, are most extraordinary. We know nothing more exact, more clear-sighted, in the history of political prophecy,—of that intelligible power which can really project the course of the future from a comprehensive and personal knowledge of the past,—than the general views which were propounded—in Calcutta itself—by this distinguished general officer, whose “Letters” were written in 1838, 1839 and 1840; but were collected for publication in 1842, only. These letters are devoted to an exposition of the policy which we ought to have observed towards the Court of Ava; of the advantages which might have been expected to spring from an alliance with Dost Mahumud, in preference to our connection with Shah Shoojah-ool-Moolk; of the steadily prosecuted designs of Russia upon British India, and dominion in Central Asia; and the overt act, indicative of those designs, in that memorable expedition for the occupation of Khiva, to which the readers of the *Herald* will recollect that we pointed at the time,—(and we stood alone in our conviction,)—as importing those schemes which were then vaguely disavowed, but shortly afterwards notoriously attempted to be carried out by that insatiate power. The General Officer, in 1840, writes thus—“Russia has announced to the world her determination to occupy Khiva.” . . . “There can be little doubt but that the position we have taken up in Affghanistan has led her to determine on the occupation of Khiva, and that she will continue to retain position there, so long as we occupy Cabool.” . . . “That

Russia will retire from Khiva, without exacting a similar sacrifice upon our part, is by no means credible."—Although, in some respects, the apprehensions of Russian influence may seem exaggerated, the following passage is interesting from its subject matter, and moreover is well reasoned.

"We should turn our eyes to the line of policy that Russia has been steadily pursuing through the successive reigns of the last five Sovereigns who have presided over the destinies of that extraordinary nation. And in doing so, we shall find that they have acted upon a definite and consistent principle of aggrandisement, and that it has been actively and deliberately followed up by each sovereign as he ascended the throne. The effects of this system are palpable in the gradual accession of territory which Russia has acquired in Asia; each war and each measure extending the limits of her dominion, till it has reached an extent, and acquired a stability that we ought not to behold without entertaining serious and wholesome doubts of the safety of our Indian possessions, if she is permitted to proceed, unmolested, in the prosecution and consummation of those plans which must, at no distant day, place her in possession of the undisputed sovereignty of Asia. She has succeeded in shutting us out of the Euxine Sea, by the closing of the Dardanelles, and her territory nearly embraces the Caspian. She has taken possession of all the country between these two seas, from the Don, southward to Tiflis. The Persian empire is at her disposal, and its sovereign, under her dictation, is at the head of an army, aided by the council of Russian officers, before Herat, a strong city, on the high road to India."

Now the date of this first "Letter" is July 10, 1838. In Letter III., dated 15th June, 1839, there is the following interesting speculation, embodied in a note, on the intrigues of Russia in connection with Affghan politics.

"It would, perhaps, be thought premature in this place to inquire into the right, or otherwise, of Persia and Russia to assume the privilege of considering themselves entitled to interfere in the affairs of Afghanistan, on the plea of the treaties entered into by the ameer of Candahar and Cabool. It is true we call them intrigues, but they may fairly be considered to come under the term treaty. M. Vickovitch certainly induced the chief of Cabool to attach himself to Russia, and we cannot possibly disprove the legitimacy of Russian interference to aid the restoration of her ally. Persia may be considered to stand in the same relation to both the principalities; and if Russia entertains the intention, and possesses the means, there is not any moral barrier to her exercising her discretion as to the measures to be adopted in favour of the Candahar and Cabool chiefs. To have cut such ground from under her feet, was one considerable inducement for our allying ourselves with the *de facto* rulers. The difficulty we should have

found in reconciling conflicting interests, replacing distrust and animosity by confidence and amity, would not have been a more onerous and delicate task than that which we have undertaken. Moreover, the undisputed right that such a connection would have given us to watch over, regulate, and arbitrate all the affairs of Afghanistan, would have been cheaply achieved at the labour consequent on the undertaking."

Again of the same place and the same intervening power :—

"We have the best authority for stating that Herat, from what it lately suffered, is utterly defenceless and dependent upon us for its existence. We have accordingly advanced money for its repair, and sent officers capable of superintending the construction of the necessary works. We know that Kamran is incapable, uncertain in his temper, and cruel in his disposition. We know that his minister is ambitious, and that he will adopt such measures as he may conceive calculated to ensure the success of his object—the aggrandisement of the state whose councils he sways. Here we have a field ripe for the intrigues of Persia and Russia, who will doubtless feed the ambition of their dupe with the hope of placing Kamran upon the throne of Cabool. All that has hitherto transpired affords the most satisfactory evidence of Shah Shoojah's inability, from incapacity, want of means, and the character of the nation, to maintain himself independent of the British power, in a country exposed to interminable internal revolt and external invasion. It is credibly reported that Colonel ——— has been despatched by the Russian Government from St. Petersburg to make his way into Afghanistan, and carry on the proceedings of his predecessor, Vickovitch."

And in connection with the same subject, let us cite the following emphatic passage, in which, "coming events cast their shadows before," in the strictest sense of the term.

"It must not be supposed that the opposition encountered by our army from the Afghans is a criterion by which a correct judgment may be formed of the opposition the several states under our influence would offer to an army entering from the westward. Nothing can be more different than the condition that Afghanistan would present, presuming its chiefs to be connected with us by subsidiary treaties, to an invading foe, than that which we experienced in our recent invasion. Allied with us, and directed by our genius, they would, it is fair to suppose, show a vigour equal to that displayed in defence of Herat, under the influence of Mr. Pottinger,—a defence that entitles the garrison, and the young hero under whose auspices, and stimulated by whose example, they fought and suffered, to every praise that any fortress can lay claim, with whose achievements history has made us acquainted."

There are questions in the following extract, somewhat difficult, we surmise, to answer.

"The measures which we have adopted have placed us in a prominent position in the great theatre of Central Asia, with a mighty and unscrupulous power in our front. We must, therefore, at all times be in a state of preparation to counteract her intrigues, or repel her aggressions, which will necessarily involve a vast increase of expense. Removed as the scene of our resources is from the theatre of our operations, all those contingencies were obvious, and ought to have been placed in the scales, when Shah Shoojah was weighed against Dost Mahumud. We must not be deceived by the Russians having disavowed the hostile proceedings of her agents. The employment of a Russian regiment, conveniently denominated deserters, against Herat, although their return to Russia had been officially required, is a sufficiently intelligible illustration of their designs. Is the Czar Nicholas a man to be duped or disobeyed by his servants? Has there ever been an abler or more absolute sovereign at the head of any despotic nation? And yet the British Government is satisfied with the statement made by Count Nesselrode! Russia having exhausted all the means that money, intrigue, and covert hostility placed at her disposal, and having for the time failed in her project, repudiates the acts of her agents. Are we justified in remaining satisfied until she resumes her intrigues and aggressions with double vigour? *Had Persia, urged on and aided by Count Simonitch, succeeded in taking Herat, what atonement would Russia have offered to England for the injury perpetrated through her instrumentality?*"

But our next citations shall place before the reader the relative portraits of Shah Shoojah and Dost Mahumud.

Of Shah Shoojah we are told—

"Shah Shoojah again erected the standard of sovereignty, but having neither energy, talent, nor character, his impotent attempt failed, and he became a pensioner of the British government.

"From Lieut. Leech's reports, we learn that Shah Shoojah had no hereditary claims to the throne of Afghanistan to the prejudice of Prince Kamran; that he usurped the throne and was expelled by his brother Mahmood, who had a prior claim, strengthened by former possession; and further, that the feeling created in his favour sprung from, and was supported by the report that the British government advocated his cause."

The lineaments of Dost Mahumud are traced, after various hands, in these lines—

"Captain Burnes, in treating of the commerce of Cabool in the second volume of his interesting and instructive work, regards the year 1816 as the epoch from which the commercial interests of England superseded those of Russia in the capital of Afghanistan, which circumstance he attributes to the justice and equity of Dost Mahumud, whose vigilant administration has rendered the great road from Turkistan, passing through Cabool and Candahar, perfectly safe for the transportation of the lucrative commerce to

found in reconciling conflicting interests, replacing distrust and animosity by confidence and amity, would not have been a more onerous and delicate task than that which we have undertaken. Moreover, the undisputed right that such a connection would have given us to watch over, regulate, and arbitrate all the affairs of Afghanistan, would have been cheaply achieved at the labour consequent on the undertaking."

Again of the same place and the same intervening power :—

"We have the best authority for stating that Herat, from what it lately suffered, is utterly defenceless and dependent upon us for its existence. We have accordingly advanced money for its repair, and sent officers capable of superintending the construction of the necessary works. We know that Kamran is incapable, uncertain in his temper, and cruel in his disposition. We know that his minister is ambitious, and that he will adopt such measures as he may conceive calculated to ensure the success of his object—the aggrandisement of the state whose councils he sways. Here we have a field ripe for the intrigues of Persia and Russia, who will doubtless feed the ambition of their dupe with the hope of placing Kamran upon the throne of Cabool. All that has hitherto transpired affords the most satisfactory evidence of Shah Shoojah's inability, from incapacity, want of means, and the character of the nation, to maintain himself independent of the British power, in a country exposed to interminable internal revolt and external invasion. It is credibly reported that Colonel ——— has been despatched by the Russian Government from St. Petersburg to make his way into Afghanistan, and carry on the proceedings of his predecessor, Vickovitch."

And in connection with the same subject, let us cite the following emphatic passage, in which, "coming events cast their shadows before," in the strictest sense of the term.

"It must not be supposed that the opposition encountered by our army from the Afghans is a criterion by which a correct judgment may be formed of the opposition the several states under our influence would offer to an army entering from the westward. Nothing can be more different than the condition that Afghanistan would present, prepared to make the most of its connection with us by subsidiary treaties, to an army which has just experienced in our recent invasion. A more accurate estimate of our genius, they would, it is fair to suppose, be formed from the display of our genius in defence of Herat, under the leadership of the British, and stimulated by whose example they would be enabled to see that any fortress can lay claim to the same security as we are now acquainted with."

There are questions in this passage which we surmise, to answer.

"The measures which we have adopted have placed us in a prominent position in the great theatre of Central Asia, with a mighty and unscrupulous power in our front. We must, therefore, at all times be in a state of preparation to counteract her intrigues, or repel her aggressions, which will necessarily involve a vast increase of expense. Removed as the scene of our resources is from the theatre of our operations, all those contingencies were obvious, and ought to have been placed in the scales, when Shah Shoojah was weighed against Dost Mahumud. We must not be deceived by the Russians having disavowed the hostile proceedings of her agents. The employment of a Russian regiment, conveniently denominated *despatches*, against Herat, although their return to Russia had been officially *required*, is a sufficiently intelligible illustration of their designs. Is the *Czar Nicholas* a man to be duped or disobeyed by his servants? Has there ever been an abler or more absolute sovereign at the head of any despotic *state*. And yet the British Government is satisfied with the *statement made by* Count Nesselrode! Russia having exhausted all the *means for* intrigue, and covert hostility placed at her disposal, and having *in* time failed in her project, repudiates the acts of her agents. *Are we* satisfied in remaining satisfied until she resumes her intrigues and *aggressions* with double vigour? Had Persia, urged on and aided by *Czar Nicholas*, succeeded in taking Herat, what atonement would *Russia* *and* *France* *be* *able* *to* *make* *for* the injury perpetrated through her *instrumentality*?"

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A close-up photograph of a person's feet wearing bright pink socks. The feet are positioned on a surface with horizontal lines, which appears to be the pages of an open book. The lighting is bright, and the focus is on the socks and the immediate surface they are touching.

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"Dost Mahumud continued to maintain claims on Runjeet Singh, that his lordship from motives of Justice and friendship could not countenance. The former averred his attention to call in the aid of Persia or any other power; he further evinced his designs of ambition and aggrandisement, and Captain Burnes left his court. Dost Mahumud continued unyielding in his demands, and the Persian prosecuted his march on Herat, and contumaciously denied the right of the British Government to interfere. Our minister in consequence left the court, having declared all relations of amity to have ceased."

"From Burnes we learn that Dost Mahumud was both an able ruler, and popular; and recent events decidedly demonstrate that Shah Shoojah is by no means popular, and that he retains possession of the throne exclusively by the aid he receives from the British Government."

"Of Dost Mahumud's competence to preside over the destinies of the Afghan nation, Captain Burnes says, 'To the vigilance which he has exercised over every branch of the administration, his success is attributable. His sole aim is money; and he seeks for it from a full knowledge of what it can purchase; he expends his entire income, though his own household is maintained on the economical scale of 5,000 rupees per month. His comprehension is quick, and his knowledge of character very great; he cannot be long deceived; he listens to every individual who complains, and with a forbearance and temper which is more highly praised than his justice and equity. In matters of a trifling nature he still adheres to the law, but in greater things his necessities have tarnished his decisions, though (as these affect the wealthier and least numerous portion of his subjects) without giving general dissatisfaction. Nothing marks the man's superiority to his countrymen more than the ability to manage as he does, with power and resources so crippled. His caution is extreme, and his suspicion so easily excited as to amount almost to an infirmity, though self-reflection brings back with itself confidence. A peace with his neighbours would certainly render the power of this man durable, and enable him to reduce his army and expenses; but, as his fame has outstripped his power, he might covet the dominion of his western neighbours, and if he were, as before he came in contact with the Seikhs, less exacting, which his good sense would dictate to him, he might consolidate his power, and fix himself as the first of a new dynasty in Cabool. His brother, the celebrated

Futteh Khan, long since pronounced him to be the hope of his family; and his subsequent career has justified his expectations."

"From the foregoing we learn several important facts:—

"Firstly, that Dost Mahumud desired to ally himself with the British Government in preference to that of Persia.

"Secondly, that his administration was popular, moderate, and efficient.

"Thirdly, that his army was by no means despicable for a native army.

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"From Capt. Leech's reports we learn that Ahmed Shah found himself at the head of the Afghan nation in 1747, in consequence of the assassination of Nadir Shah, and retained his position chiefly from having possessed himself of the Persian treasure on the fall of his predecessor.

"From Vigne's 'Travels in Afghanistan and the Punjab' we learn that Dost Mahumud was renowned for his justice—so much so, that when any thing even seemingly arbitrary occurred, it was not unusual to exclaim 'What! is Dost Mahumud dead, that there is no justice?' We are told, too, by the same author, that the ameer was nervously anxious for an alliance with the British power."

We must postpone to another opportunity some well-written disquisitions on the general impolicy of our interference in this disastrous quarrel.

We may observe by way of conclusion, and for the present,—and we do so, in all good humour, and certainly with all personal respect for the character, the talents, and the practical knowledge of Indian affairs of Major-General C., that he does not seem to be exempt from the besetting propensity of almost all Indian military servants; namely, the tendency to espouse a career of territorial aggrandisement; and its concomitant evil, a light appreciation of the evil and wickedness of war in the abstract, probably from a familiar acquaintance with its practical miseries. How fondly he cherishes the propensity, how coolly he contemplates the evil in question, may be inferred from the following remarkable passage—

"We must be prepared to adopt measures that at first sight may appear wild and pregnant with danger; but the more closely they are examined, the more evident will appear the wisdom of adopting them.

"England must insist upon the free passage of the Dardanelles, and the uncontrolled navigation of the Euxine; any opposition to this should be considered as a declaration of war. Acting upon which it would be our policy to re-organize and guarantee the independence of Poland; to stimu-

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late and aid the Porte in the recovery of her provinces in Asia Minor and Armenia; and whilst this was going on in Europe, we should in this country restore the old king of Ava, confine him to the eastward of the Irrawaddie, parcel out the intermediate country between our present frontier and that river into petty subsidiary states, and have a military road from Munnypore to that river, and impose a subsidiary force on Nepaul and Bootan.

"To the west and north-west, the Indus, from its source to the sea, must be our boundary. The Afghan kingdom must be regenerated, and an intimate connection established between us. This course would be the work of time, but no delay in commencing the European part of it should take place. If we permit the second move of the Russian game to take place; if we allow a Russian Persian army to invest Candahar; if we allow, by our supineness, a confederacy to be organised between Nicholas, Mahumud Shah, and Dost Mahumud, our folly may be disastrous.

"Should the magnitude of the empire thus faintly shadowed out, and the difficulties and dangers of acquiring it, scare us from the attempt, we must in that case look at the second proposition proposed in the commencement of these remarks; and in so doing, I think it will appear manifest that we shall never be able to maintain our present situation; we must proceed onwards, or we must retrograde till our kingdom resolves itself into our commencement—a factory—and that we should not be long allowed to retain."

One further remark, and we have done. It was said by the Cynic, a score of centuries ago, that he could never understand what was the distinctive offence which constituted any one man, as contradistinguished from another, a robber. What would he have said to our major-general? For that gallant officer says, "We pay one lac of rupees annually to the robber chiefs of the Khyber Pass, for unmolested egress and ingress; notwithstanding which the greatest difficulties and danger are encountered in the passage." Happy had it been had this payment been continued, in the spirit of our original contract with these mountaineers, whom, whilst invading Afghanistan, and forcing upon the people of Cabool a detested and discarded tyrant, we thus call "robbers." The ill-advised and arbitrary resumption on our part of this species of subsidy has too certainly entailed the sanguinary extermination of a vast body of our British and native troops in their terrible retreat from Cabool, through the ambuscades of the Ghilzies and the horrors of those savage and tempest-scathed gorges among which they had to cut their bloody way.

BRITISH INDIA.

To the Editor of the MORNING HERALD.

Sir,—I shall feel obliged if you can make it convenient to give the subjoined remarks a place in the columns of your journal. I remain, sir, your obedient servant,

THE AUTHOR OF
“LETTERS ON RECENT TRANSACTIONS IN INDIA.”

April 24, 1842.

There is not anything more inimical to the freedom and rights of mankind, or more justly exposed to and meriting general reprobation, than an aggrandising spirit in a powerful nation. Neither is there any man whose principle and judgment lead him more sincerely and strenuously to condemn in writers, of every description, a tendency to espouse or advocate uncalled-for interference in the affairs of our independent neighbours and subsidiary allies, than mine do me; and all my endeavours, humble as they may be, tend to bring public opinion to a deliberate and impartial judgment upon recent transactions in Afghanistan. I am, however, considered by an able and enlightened journal as “having a tendency to espouse a career of territorial aggrandisement, and to entertain but a light appreciation of the evils and wickedness of war in the abstract.” The impression that I am so disposed originates, no doubt, in an imperfect knowledge of the grounds upon which I deemed it expedient to advocate strong measures towards Nepaul and Ava in 1838.

With a view, therefore, to guard against an erroneous conclusion on the part of the public, I am induced to advert briefly in this place to the actual condition of both these States at the period when I recommended the adoption of prompt and decided proceedings against them. At the time to which I refer, the councils

of Catmandoo were swayed by a violent reckless woman, the imperious wife of a weak and timid prince. This lady, a tool in the hands of an ambitious, wicked, and turbulent faction, was busied in sending emissaries to every power in India to organise combined operations against our supremacy, and impatiently desiring the occurrence of some hoped-for opportunity for realising the long-cherished expectations of re-establishing her ascendancy in the mountains northward of Nepaul, and regaining her lost influence in the Terrai.

With regard to the Burmese, a reference to "Colonel Symes's History of Ava" will show that it had been from our earliest connection with it faithless and arrogant in the extreme, and that we should, sooner or later, be compelled to assume that tone of decision and superiority which our security and dignity appeared to dictate, at a period antecedent to our campaign beyond the Indus. The usurper Tharawoddie, who dethroned our ally, the legitimate monarch of Ava, appeared to have fixed his eye upon the former history of his country, and, in his conduct towards Colonel Burnes, to be following in the footsteps of his predecessors in their conduct to Captain Alves, in 1760, Captain Symes, in 1795, and Captain Cox, in 1796, and the unworthy medium selected to communicate with our early ambassadors was again resorted to for carrying on its communications with the British power in 1837 and 1838.

Was it prudent, I would ask, to leave two powers so disposed unshackled in our rear, when we were sending our disposable army upon a distant, dangerous, and uncertain expedition? In great undertakings where peril is imminent, wisdom would undoubtedly proceed with all the prudence that reflection and foresight could devise. It was otherwise determined on; reliance was placed upon the smiles of fortune, the die was cast, and our destiny maintained its ascendancy. But had Herat fallen, or our good fortune abandoned us at Ghuznee, we should in all probability, when it was too late, have been roused from a fatal and delusive dream of security. To avert threatened evils we ought to have adopted measures to guard against the probable consequences of a disposition in the minds of the reigning powers of Catmandoo, which we knew to be opposed to our well-being. Arranging to ward off any hostile demonstration on the part of Ava would not have been difficult, for by merely advocating the cause of the legitimate sove-

reign of the country, our deposed ally, we might have effected all that was requisite to have secured us against the consequences of a reverse to the northward of our dominions. Such a course, however, was not deemed expedient, and another ambassador was deputed to supply the place of Colonel Burney; but he too was constrained to abandon his unenviable post, after enduring with patience for a considerable period indignities to which a British ambassador ought never to be exposed. Having said sufficient to lead commentators into the fruitful fields of inquiry before they record their judgment upon important transactions in distant countries, I shall leave my opinions to their fate, but cannot conclude without some reference to the intelligence received from India by the February mail, and the feeling that those disastrous accounts have excited.

However disposed I may have been to apprehend unfavourable results from the line of policy adopted by the Government of India in communication with and under the sanction of the then Ministers of the Crown, it was utterly impossible to have anticipated the fatal catastrophe that has thrown such a shade over our military proceedings westward of the Indus.

The destruction of the Cabool force, apparently by infatuation upon one side and presumed treachery upon the other, acting upon the best sympathies of our nature, has induced the public voice to cry aloud for retribution upon the perpetrators of a tragedy, the circumstances of which would stain even the annals of a semi-barbarian people.

Any comment upon the conduct of the principal officers engaged in this deplorable affair, ignorant as we are of the causes that led to the convention, would be, to say the least of it, not well-timed. I shall refrain, therefore, from making any, and conclude with the expression of my sincere hope that Government will not permit itself to be hurried in its adoption of measures involving the rights of other nations, and the character of Great Britain.

The whole question of the Afghanistan war, as well as a thorough knowledge of every particular connected with the retreat and destruction of our troops, demands calm and deliberate consideration, that wisdom and justice may govern the measures that must either aggravate the wrong already committed, or, in some degree, atone for the melancholy result of councils which would seem to have

been under the influence of those delusive views which political expediency too often imposes on the judgment.

Our interests would seem to dictate that we should not lightly resolve upon either retaining or evacuating Afghanistan; that we should have a predominate influence in the councils of whatever government may be established in that country will hardly admit of a doubt; and, in determining this vital question, the predilections of the mass of the people ought to be ascertained, and every consideration shown to their choice. The maintenance of a British army west of the Indus would, I apprehend, prove as injurious to our interest as it would be at variance with the rights of a people in whose affairs we have wantonly interfered, and whose hostility and hatred we have most unwisely provoked.

FORT WILLIAM,
POLITICAL DEPARTMENT,

23^D OCTOBER, 1838.

The Honourable the President of the Council of India in Council, having received from the Right Honourable the Governor-General of India the following Declaration, is pleased to direct that it be published for general information.

DECLARATION
ON THE PART OF THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
THE GOVERNOR GENERAL OF INDIA.

SIMLA, 1ST OCTOBER, 1838.

The Right Honourable the Governor General of India, having, with the concurrence of the Supreme Council, directed the assembling of a British Force for service across the Indus, his lordship deems it proper to publish the following exposition of the reasons which have led to this important measure.

It is a matter of notoriety that the Treaties entered into by the British Government, in the year 1832, with the Ameers of Sind, the Nawab of Bahawalpore, and Maha Raja Runjeet Singh, had for their object, by opening the navigation of the Indus, to facilitate the extension of commerce, and to gain for the British nation, in Central Asia, that legitimate influence which an interchange of benefits would naturally produce.

With a view to invite the aid of the *de facto* rulers of Afghanistan to the measures necessary for giving full effect to those Treaties, Captain Burnes was deputed, towards the close of the year 1836, on a mission to Dost Mahomed Khan, the Chief of Cabool. The original objects of that officer's mission were purely of a commercial nature. Whilst Captain Burnes, however, was on his journey to Cabool, information was received by the Governor General that the troops of Dost Mahomed Khan had made a sudden and un-

provoked attack on those of our ancient Ally, Maha Raja Runjeet Singh. It was naturally to be apprehended that His Highness the Maha Raja would not be slow to avenge this aggression, and it was to be feared that the flames of war being once kindled in the very regions into which we were endeavouring to extend our commerce, the peaceful and beneficial purposes of the British Government would be altogether frustrated. In order to avert a result so calamitous, the Governor General resolved on authorizing Captain Burnes to intimate to Dost Mahomed Khan, that if he should evince a disposition to come to just and reasonable terms with the Maha Raja, his lordship would exert his good offices with His Highness for the restoration of an amicable understanding between the two Powers. The Maha Raja, with the characteristic confidence which he has uniformly placed in the faith and friendship of the British nation, at once assented to the proposition of the Governor General to the effect, that in the mean time, hostilities on his part should be suspended.

It subsequently came to the knowledge of the Governor General, that a Persian army was besieging Herat; that intrigues were actively prosecuted throughout Afghanistan for the purpose of extending Persian influence and authority to the banks of, and even beyond, the Indus; and that the court of Persia had not only commenced a course of injury and insult to the officers of Her Majesty's mission in the Persian territory, but had afforded evidence of being engaged in designs wholly at variance with the principles and objects of its alliance with Great Britain.

After much time spent by Captain Burnes in fruitless negotiation at Cabool, it appeared that Dost Mahomed Khan, chiefly in consequence of his reliance upon Persian encouragement and assistance, persisted, as respected his misunderstanding with the Seikhs, in urging the most unreasonable pretensions, such as the Governor General could not, consistently with justice and his regard for the friendship of Maha Raja Runjeet Sing, be the channel of submitting to the consideration of His Highness; that he avowed schemes of aggrandizement and ambition, injurious to the security and peace of the frontiers of India; and that he openly threatened, in furtherance of those schemes, to call in every foreign aid which he could command. Ultimately he gave his undisguised support to the Persian designs in Afghanistan, of the unfriendly and injurious character of which, as concerned the

British power in India, he was well apprized, and by his utter disregard of the views and interests of the British Government, compelled Captain Burnes to leave Cabool without having effected any of the objects of his mission.

It was now evident that no further interference could be exercised by the British Government to bring about a good understanding between the Seikh ruler and Dost Mahomed Khan, and the hostile policy of the latter chief showed too plainly that, so long as Cabool remained under his government, we could never hope that the tranquillity of our neighbourhood would be secured, or that the interests of our Indian empire would be preserved inviolate.

The Governor General deems it in this place necessary to revert to the siege of Herat, and the conduct of the Persian nation. The siege of that city has now been carried on by the Persian army for many months. The attack upon it was a most unjustifiable and cruel aggression, perpetrated and continued, notwithstanding the solemn and repeated remonstrances of the British envoy at the court of Persia, and after every just and becoming offer of accommodation had been made and rejected. The besieged have behaved with gallantry and fortitude worthy of the justice of their cause, and the Governor General would yet indulge the hope that their heroism may enable them to maintain a successful defence until succours shall reach them from British India. In the meantime, the ulterior designs of Persia, affecting the interests of the British Government, have been, by succession of events, more and more openly manifested. The Governor General has recently ascertained by an official despatch from Mr. M'Neill, her Majesty's envoy, that his excellency has been compelled, by the refusal of his just demands, and by a systematic course of disrespect adopted towards him by the Persian government, to quit the court of the Shah, and to make a public declaration of the cessation of all intercourse between the two governments. The necessity under which Great Britain is placed, of regarding the present advance of the Persian arms into Afghanistan as an act of hostility towards herself, has also been officially communicated to the Shah, under the express order of Her Majesty's Government.

The chiefs of Candahar (brothers of Dost Mahomed Khan of Cabool) have avowed their adherence to the Persian policy, with the same full knowledge of its opposition to the rights and inte-

rests of the British nation in India, and have been openly assisting in the operations against Herat.

In the crisis of affairs consequent upon the retirement of our envoy from Cabool, the Governor-General felt the importance of taking immediate measures for arresting the rapid progress of foreign intrigue and aggression towards our own territories.

His attention was naturally drawn at this conjuncture to the position and claims of Shah Shoojah-ool-Moolk, a monarch who, when in power, had cordially acceded to the measures of united resistance to external enmity, which were at that time judged necessary by the British Government, and who, on his empire being usurped by its present rulers, had found an honourable asylum in the British dominions.

It had been clearly ascertained, from the information furnished by the various officers who have visited Afghanistan, that the Barukzye chiefs, from their disunion and unpopularity, were ill-fitted, under any circumstances, to be useful allies to the British Government, and to aid us in our just and necessary measures of national defence. Yet so long as they refrained from proceedings injurious to our interest and security, the British Government acknowledged and respected their authority. But a different policy appeared to be now more than justified by the conduct of those chiefs, and to be indispensable to our own safety. The welfare of our possessions in the East requires that we should have on our Western frontier, an ally who is interested in resisting aggression, and establishing tranquillity, in the place of chiefs ranging themselves in subservience to a hostile power, and seeking to promote schemes of conquest and aggrandizement.

After a serious and mature deliberation the Governor General was satisfied that a pressing necessity, as well as every consideration of policy and justice, warranted us in espousing the cause of Shah Shoojah-ool-Moolk, whose popularity throughout Afghanistan had been proved to his Lordship by the strong and unanimous testimony of the best authorities. Having arrived at this determination, the Governor General was further of opinion, that it was just and proper, no less from the position of Maha Raja Runjeet Singh, than from his undeviating friendship towards the British Government that His Highness should have the offer of becoming a party to the contemplated operations. Mr. Macnaghten was accordingly deputed in June last to the court of His Highness, and

the result of his mission has been the conclusion of a Tripartite Treaty by the British Government, the Maha Raja, and Shah Shoojah-ool-Moolk, whereby His Highness is guaranteed in his present possessions, and has bound himself to co-operate for the restoration of the Shah to the throne of his ancestors. The friends and enemies of any one of the contracting parties have been declared to be the friends and enemies of all. Various points have been adjusted, which had been the subjects of discussion between the British Government and his Highness the Maha Raja, the identity of whose interests with those of the Honourable Company has now been made apparent to all the surrounding States. A guaranteed independence will, upon favourable conditions, be tendered to the Ameers of Sinde; and the integrity of Herat in the possession of its present Ruler, will be fully respected; while by the measures completed, or in progress, it may reasonably be hoped that the general freedom and security of commerce will be promoted; that the name and just influence of the British Government will gain their proper footing among the nations of Central Asia; that tranquillity will be established upon the most important frontier of India; and that a lasting barrier will be raised against hostile intrigue and encroachment.

His Majesty Shah Shoojah-ool-Moolk will enter Afghanistan, surrounded by his own troops, and will be supported against foreign interference and factious opposition by a British army. The Governor General confidently hopes that the Shah will be speedily replaced on his throne by his own subjects and adherents, and when once he shall be secured in power, and the independence and integrity of Afghanistan established, the British army will be withdrawn. The Governor General has been led to these measures by the duty which is imposed upon him of providing for the security of the possessions of the British Crown; but he rejoices that, in the discharge of this duty, he will be enabled to assist in restoring the union and prosperity of the Afghan people. Throughout the approaching operations, British influence will be sedulously employed to further every measure of general benefit; to reconcile differences; to secure oblivion of injuries; and to put an end to the distractions by which, for so many years, the welfare and happiness of the Afghans have been impaired. Even to the Chiefs, whose hostile proceedings have given just cause of offence to the British Government, it will seek to secure liberal and honourable treatment, on

their tendering early submission, and ceasing from opposition to that course of measures, which may be judged the most suitable for the general advantage of their country.

By order of the Right Hon. the Governor General of India,

(Signed) W. H. MACNAGHTEN,

Secretary to the Govt. of India, with the Govr. Genl.

NOTIFICATION.

With reference to the preceding Declaration, the following appointments are made :—

Mr. W. H. Macnaghten, Secretary to Government, will assume the functions of Envoy and Minister on the part of the Government of India at the Court of Shah Shoojah-ool-Moolk. Mr. Macnaghten will be assisted by the following officers :—

Captain Alexander Burnes, of the Bombay Establishment, who will be employed under Mr. Macnaghten's directions as Envoy to the Chief of Kelat, or other States.

Lieutenant E. D'Arcy Todd, of the Bengal Artillery, to be Political Assistant and Military Secretary to the Envoy and Minister.

Lieutenant Eldrid Pottinger, of the Bombay Artillery; Lieutenant R. Leach, of the Bombay Engineers; Mr. P. B. Lord, of the Bombay Medical Establishment, to be Political Assistants to ditto ditto.

Lieutenant E. B. Conolly, of the 6th Regiment Bengal Cavalry, to command the Escort of the Envoy and Minister, and to be Military Assistant to ditto ditto.

Mr. G. J. Berwick, of the Bengal Medical Establishment, to be Surgeon to ditto ditto.

(Signed) W. H. MACNAGHTEN,
Secretary to the Govt. of India, with the Gov.-Genl.

By order of the Honourable the President of the Council of India in Council.

H. T. PRINSEP,
Secretary to the Government of India.



